

# The Witness:

AN UNFETTERED MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF

Biblical Literature, Expository Papers,

Notes of Addresses, Conference Reports,

Questions and Answers, Intelligence, Poetry, Correspondence, &c.

EDITED BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL.

VOLUME TWENTY.

OVER ONE HUNDRED VALUABLE PAPERS FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

GLASGOW:

HY. PICKERING, THE WITNESS OFFICE, 180 BUCHANAN STREET,

*Booksellers and Publishers of Christian Literature.*

LONDON: JAMES E. HAWKINS, 17 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C., AND 36 BAKER STREET, W.

DUBLIN: DUBLIN TRACT REPOSITORY, 10 D'OLIER STREET.

1890.

## OUR PURPOSE.

---

It is our intention to continue this Periodical as we have been enabled to do by the grace of God now for twenty years, adhering to the lines upon which we have hitherto gone. These are mainly :

I.—To keep back nothing that we believe to be generally profitable.

II.—Whilst not shunning to declare, in so far as we have learned it, all the counsel of God, to do so in the Spirit of Christ “always with grace” though also “seasoned with salt,” thus seeking to combine “truth and love.”

III.—We desire to present the various truths of Scripture, so far as in us lies, in due proportion, not specially giving prominence to one line of truth or another, but seeking the edification of saints, that they may be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, and stand perfect and complete in the same.

IV.—To this end we shall continue, with the help of God, to give such teaching as we are able on the great fundamental doctrines of the Word, on the practical bearing of these, on prophetic subjects, on assembly principles and difficulties ; and we purpose specially devoting a larger space than heretofore to elementary articles for the young and inexperienced in the ways of the Lord.

V.—We heartily thank all who have helped us by replies to questions, although many replies have *necessarily* not appeared, owing in many cases only to want of space, and we trust this willing aid may be continued.

VI.—Finally, it is proposed to devote four pages (same paper as the body of *Witness*) to short notes concerning the work of the Lord at home and abroad, and short reports of conferences or other meetings ; this department, though beset with special difficulties, being much appreciated by most of our readers.

We earnestly desire the help of all who love the Lord by prayer for the supply of all needed grace.

We also seek the help of those interested, in the way of obtaining new subscribers, and so increasing the usefulness of the periodical.

EDITOR.

## Special Contents.

Notes on 1 Corinthians (chap. xv. to close), BY THE EDITOR, ... ..	17, 38, 56, 71, 90
Notes on 2 Corinthians, BY THE EDITOR, ... ..	99, 113, 136
Biblical Solutions, BY A. P. MACDONALD, ... ..	35, 54, 68
"Life" Articles, BY J. HIXON IRVING, ... ..	I, 19, 35, 51, 65, 86, 108, 121
Elementary Articles, ... ..	66, 106, 168
Correspondence, ... ..	12, 28, 93, 109, 126, 141, 158, 173, 184

## General Contents.

	PAGE		PAGE
A Fitly-spoken Word, ... .. G. C.	6	Summer Work among the Villages, ... ..	77
Are We "Filled"? ... .. M. M. A.	70	Separation from System, ... .. J. H.	106
A Call to Prayer, ... ..	92	Sufferings, Consolation and Confidence, J. R. C.	113
An Edifying Ministry, ... .. J. R.	104	Search the Scriptures, ... ..	138
Africa, Tidings from, ... ..	16, 31	Something Wrong, ... ..	147
Brotherly Love, ... ..	62	Sin and Righteousness, ... ..	172
British Columbia, ... .. A. M.	76, 141	Select Sayings from Several Addresses, R. C. C.	166, 183
California, ... .. A. M.	13	Stoned in China, ... .. J. G. B.	184
Church Order, ... ..	28	The Spirit of Life, ... .. J. H. I.	1, 19, 35
Confidence in God, ... ..	72	The Glorious Change, ... .. J. R. C.	7
Condition of Heart and Soul, ... .. G. A.	117	The Opening Year, ... .. E. F. C.	9
Conditions of Spiritual Prosperity, ... .. S. N.	153	The Glory of God's Salvation, ... .. J. W.	25, 39
Christmas, ... .. J. R. C.	181	To God's Sorrowing and Afflicted, ... .. W. S.	27
David's Purchase from Araunah, ... ..	35	The Lord Jesus at Bethany, ... .. J. R. C.	33
District Oversight Meetings, ... .. J. R. C.	129, 185	The Collection for the Saints, ... .. J. R. C.	38
Departure of Robert Hake, ... ..	185	The Holiness and Sufferings of Christ, ... .. C. T.	42
Excommunication, ... ..	186	The Word of Life, J. H. I.	51, 65, 86, 108, 121
Elijah and Obadiah, ... ..	134	The Death of Terah, ... .. A. P. M.	54
God Over All, ... ..	4, 22	The Earthly Relations of the Heavenly Family, ... ..	60, 73
God's Church and God's Churches, H. D.	145, 170	The Sojournings of the Israelites, A. P. M.	68
Garenganze, News from ... ..	31	The Book of Esther, ... .. W. G.	73
How to Act 'Mid Failure, ... .. H.	11	The Sonship of Christ, W. H. B., &c., 83, 126, 160	83, 126, 160
Hardened, ... .. P. H.	12	The Closing Words of First Corinthians, J. R. C.	90
Hambleton, John ... ..	32	Thrice "Peace be unto You," ... .. H. D.	97, 118
Helping Together by Prayer, ... ..	136	The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, J. R. C.	99
Holding On, ... .. W. S.	168	The Prayers in Eph. I. and III., ... ..	139
Intercessory Prayer, ... ..	156	The Chief Business of the Child of God, R. C. C.	148
Japan, ... .. W. G. S.	10, 173	The Carnal and the Spiritual, ... .. J. R. C.	151, 164
Judging, ... ..	78	The Different Forms of the Kingdom of God, J. H. B.	154
Liberty of Ministry, and its Abuses, ... ..	11	The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, ... .. J. H. B.	161
Lovable Christians, ... .. S. N.	12	The Mutual Relation of Assemblies, W. H. B.	177
Love Mightier than Logic, ... ..	90	"Worlds" or "Ages," ... .. G. A. S.	12
Motto for the Lord's People, ... .. Hy. P.	9	Women's Rights, ... ..	29
Ministry in Temporal Things, ... .. J. R. C.	56	What are you going to do with Your Talent, ... ..	44
Nebuchadnezzar, ... ..	57	Where did the Wise Men from the East find and worship the Child Jesus? ... ..	120
Names Applied to the People of God, J. R. C.	66	Words by the Way, ... .. P. H.	140
New Zealand, ... .. G. J. M.	77	"Yet a Little While," ... .. J.	45
On Backsliding, ... .. J. R. C.	49		
On Prosperity, ... .. C.	56	POETRY.	
On Increase of Knowledge, ... .. J. R. C.	81	Home is Drawing Nearer, ... .. D. M'I.	25
Paul's Cheering Exhortation, ... .. J. R. C.	17	Standing by the Cross, ... .. A. L.	45
Paul's Adversaries, ... .. J. R. C.	71	Streams from Lebanon, ... .. A. W. P. S.	68
Paul to Philemon, ... .. G.	101, 115	A Prayer for the Present Time, ... .. H. B. C.	93
Piping and Dancing, ... ..	123	The Lord's Day, ... .. A. W. P. S.	124
Prayer, ... .. J. G. M'V.	131	The Three Coronations, ... .. J. H.	141
Questions and Answers. (See next Page.)			
Restoration of Soul, ... .. G. H.	44		
Real Waiting upon God, ... ..	89		
Redemption and Rest, ... .. W. G. S.	93		

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

- |   | PAGE |   | PAGE |
|---|------|---|------|
| 339 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? .. .. .   | 14   | 356 It is being taught by some that the "ungodly" of 1 Peter iv. 18 are Christians in the sects; the "sinners" are those who have left a right position and gone back to the sects; and the "righteous" are those who maintain a right position. Is this the correct interpretation of the verse? .. .. . | 110  |
| 340 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)? .. .. .   | 15   | 357 Could any reader explain the meaning of 1 John iv. 17, last clause, "Because as He is, so are we in this world"? .. .. .  | 111  |
| 341 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.? .. .. .   | 15   | 358 What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for introducing those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them? .. .. .  | 127  |
| 342 Should a child of God enlist or become a soldier? .. .. .   | 29   | 359 Is there any Scriptural warrant for the assertion, made by many students of prophecy, that the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt? .. .. .   | 128  |
| 343 Please explain the apparent contradiction between 2 Sam. xxiv. 24 ("fifty shekels of silver") and 1 Chron. xxi. 24, 25 ("six hundred shekels of gold"), .. .. .   | 30   | 360 Is it right for Christian parents to bring their children to the breaking of bread meeting, and to furnish them with hymn books to join in the singing? Further, is it scriptural to allow those to sing who have been put out of fellowship, but who come and occupy the back seats? .. .. .         | 142  |
| 344 Who and what were the Nicolaitanes; and to whom does the term refer in the prophetic aspect of the seven epistles to the churches of Asia? .. .. .  | 46   | 361 What would be the scriptural course for an assembly to take with a sister who persists (honestly believing it to be of God) in addressing mixed audiences of men and women? .. .. .   | 143  |
| 345 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? .. .. .   | 47   | 362 Where there are converts in one place speaking different languages, mutually unintelligible—e.g., Chinese, Malays, Tamils—would it be contrary to the Word of God to hold separate meetings for the breaking of bread on the Lord's day? .. .. .  | 144  |
| 346 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"? .. .. .   | 48   | 363 Please explain Luke xxiii. 43 and xvi. 26.—When a Christian falls asleep in Jesus where does his soul go to? and, is it active or not? .. .. .  | 144  |
| 347 If the parables of Matthew xiii. have all reference to the present dispensation, how do such passages as "Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them," and "The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just," harmonise with 1 Thess. iv., the removal of the saints from amongst the wicked to meet the Lord in the air? .. .. .                              | 63   | 364 When one believer is far from a gathering ought he alone to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread? .. .. .   | 159  |
| 348 Is it scriptural to call "the Lord's Table" "the Father's Table"? .. .. .   | 63   | 365 Why is the tribe of Dan not mentioned in the list—Rev. vii.? .. .. .  | 159  |
| 349 Does Eph. v. 4 imply that there are certain "foolish talkings" and "jestings" which are convenient, or does it mean that none of these things are convenient or befitting? .. .. .  | 64   | 366 Do the words, "this day," in Ps. ii. 7, and quoted in Acts xiii. 33 and Heb. i. 5, refer to the incarnation or resurrection of Christ? and, if it be either, how are the verses to be reconciled with the eternal Sonship of Christ? .. .. .  | 160  |
| 350 What is the meaning of the precept, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. vii. 1)? and how can it be reconciled with the instruction of 1 Cor. v. 12, "Do not ye judge them that are within"? .. .. .  | 78   | 367 Is salvation on condition of our faithfulness, or can we be lost after having been born again from above? .. .. .   | 174  |
| 351 What constitutes a type in Scripture; or, what may be legitimately designated a type? .. .. .   | 80   | 368 Is the reconciliation spoken of in Heb. ii. 17 a present work of our Lord Jesus Christ as Priest, or was it effected at the Cross? .. .. .  | 175  |
| 352 Is it scriptural to say that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God from all eternity? .. .. .   | 94   | 369 How are we to get the people to come into the hall for preaching the Gospel? We are failing to get them to come in, though we do go out to invite them in, .. .. .  | 175  |
| 353 Matt. xix. 23, 24.—Please distinguish between "the kingdom of the heavens" and "the kingdom of God"; also between the kingdom of "our Lord" and "His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15), .. .. .   | 94   | 370 Does Deut. xxiii. 19, 20 forbid a brother in the Lord, in this dispensation, taking usury from another brother? .. .. .   | 176  |
| 354 Please explain 2 Thess. ii. 1, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him," .. .. .   | 95   | 371 What scripture can be given for excluding from fellowship those who hold fundamental error? .. .. .   | 186  |
| 355 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9). Does not this text imply that the believer needs to be forgiven again and again, and that conditionally upon his confessing his sins as they occur? If so, how is it reconciled with passages implying that forgiveness was imparted once for all at conversion? (See Col. ii. 13, iii. 13; Eph. iv. 32), .. .. . | 96   | 372 Is it right for those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart to view themselves as forming the faithful remnant of their day? .. .. .   | 187  |
|   |      | 373 In our worship or fellowship meetings is it best for one brother to lead regularly, or should each brother have opportunity to lead his own hymn or psalm? .. .. .  | 188  |



# THE WITNESS:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

## THE SPIRIT OF LIFE; \*

OR,  
A Sixfold View of the Dealings of the  
Holy Spirit with Believers.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

[FIRST PAPER.]

**B**ELOVED, we need hardly say to you that the Holy Spirit is no mere emanation from Deity: an influence or energy proceeding from God; but is a person—Divine, God Himself. If there were no proofs found in the Word beyond those furnished by the titles bestowed upon Him, they would of themselves be sufficient to prove His Divinity.

Some of them, as the "Spirit of God," or the "Spirit of the Living God," connect Him immediately with the Godhead.

Others show His relation to the Son as the "Spirit of Christ," the "Spirit of Jesus Christ," and the "Spirit of His Son." These titles also connect the believer in the Lord with the Spirit. The former shows His indwelling, the next His imparting strength for suffering, the latter as producing in the heart the sonship cry of "Abba, Father."

There are also *seven* personal titles, the first and chief of which occurs some *fifty-one* times in the New Testament alone, viz., "The Holy Spirit." This designation is not bestowed because that holiness is an attribute of His in a sense pre-eminent above the Father and Son, but because He is the author of all holiness. We have no space for the mere enumeration of the remaining personal titles. There are several special epithets which are like gems of the rarest kind, not alone on account of

their number being so small, but, like them, because the more they are examined the more will their beauty be seen and their true value be appreciated. He is the "Spirit of Grace" and the "Spirit of Truth" (Heb. x. 29, John xvi. 13), and as such it is His office and work to unfold to the heart of the saint the perfections, glories, and beauties of Jesus Christ who is "full of *grace and truth*." He is also denominated the "Spirit of Promise" and the "Spirit of Glory" (Eph. i. 14, 1 Pet. iv. 14)—the former because he was the subject of Promise from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Wait for the promise of the Father which (saith He) ye have heard of Me." As such He seals the believer, or is the seal, bringing home to his heart the promise of an incorruptible, inalienable inheritance of which he is the heir. As the latter—the "Spirit of Glory"—He sustains the persecuted for the name of Christ by teaching them, through the truth of the Word, that the sufferings of this fleeting present are not worthy to be compared to the glory of the enduring future that will be speedily theirs. There remains yet one more of those precious, special titles to look at, namely, "The Spirit of Life" (Rom. viii. 2). As the Spirit of Life He sets the believer free from the dual law of sin and death, cutting him off from his old relationships and bringing him into an entirely new relation to God and His Christ. It is of His work as the Spirit of Life that we propose to meditate upon at this time. As an orderly arrangement of truth greatly contributes to an understanding of the same, we make that our apology for the following order:—

- I. HIS REGENERATIVE WORK.
- II. HIS FORMATIVE WORK.
- III. HIS PRESERVATIVE WORK.
- IV. HIS INSTRUCTIVE WORK.
- V. HIS CONFIRMATIVE WORK.
- VI. HIS CONDUCTIVE WORK.

\* "Eternal Life in Six Aspects," and "Evidences of the New Life in Six Proofs," by same author, id. each. Witness Office.

## I. His Regenerative Work.

"*Born of the Spirit.*" "*The Spirit of Life.*" "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth.*" "*The Spirit giveth life.*" "*The renewing of the Holy Ghost.*"—John iii. 5, Rom. viii. 2, John vi. 63, 2 Cor. iii. 6, Titus iii. 5.

Our blessed Lord's return to heaven was absolutely necessary to the presence of the Spirit on the earth. This we gather from His own words:—"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." The presence of Christ in heaven with the presence of the Spirit on the earth contribute to make this present dispensation of the grace of God, whilst the return of our Lord to fulfil His promise—"I will come again and receive you unto Myself," and the consequent withdrawal of the Spirit in His present manifestation—will mark its close. Between those two points—Pentecost and the Rapture—the opening and the close of this age, the Spirit is on the earth acting on behalf of Father and Son: it is through Him they now work. His first action is world-ward, and it is *convictive*. He is convicting a portion of it at least—of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John xvi. 8-11). We repeat a portion of it—that part out of which the Church of God is being now gathered; and blessed be His name. The sphere of His influence is daily widening, so that multitudes are coming beneath His convictive energy—energy which works in the soul subject to His influence—repentance unto life. For He who wounds also heals, and He who kills also makes alive. His convictive work is followed by His regenerative work. Prior to conviction the soul is insensible—dead; but when the Convictor casts His holy light into every part of the being, then there is an awakening, more or less severe, to the fact that sin reigns over the soul unto death. Then it is that the once slumbering one begins to seek forgiveness and life. At what moment, or stage, of this convictive process the *germ* of life—which is regeneration—is conveyed to the being, no mind but the Divine can discover or decide. Into the mysteries of this regenerative process it would be worse than idle to seek to pry. It is sufficient for us to know, as the Spirit of Life

He gives to those who are dead in trespass and sins. Not only does He give life as a distinct entity dwelling in the Spirit, but He Himself, according to the promise of Christ, takes up His abode in the cleansed and quickened one. "He abideth with you and shall be *in* you." Thus a sight of self, as vile and polluted, fit only for the outer darkness, is invariably followed by an unveiling of Christ, whose blood removes from the conscience the guilt of years, and whose Spirit takes up His abode within; so that the heart, which before was as a cage of unclean birds—the house of the strong man armed—now becomes a fit dwelling-place for the Holy One, by which indwelling he is made a new creation. All such may with humble joy and God-begotten confidence, say—"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

No condemnation, for the law of *grace* hath dealt with the law of *sin*; and the law of *life* with the law of *death*. Such is the blessed result of the regenerative work of the Spirit of Life.

## II. His Formative Work.

"*He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost.*" "*Ye shall be baptised in the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*" "*In one Spirit were we all baptised into one body.*"—Matt. iii. 2, Acts i. 5, 1 Cor. xii. 12.

There are six baptisms mentioned in the New Testament (five of which are found in the gospel of Matthew). The first in order of time is the baptism of John in water unto repentance (Matt. iii. 2). His baptism was inclusive and exclusive. It included those only who repented of their sins, and only such, for the Pharisees and Sadducees were refused baptism because of their impitence. It was exclusive: it excluded those who were outside the Jewish nation. This baptism virtually ceased with the Baptist. The second in order was the baptism of our Lord in suffering and death (Matt. xx. 22). His was such an immersion as no one before nor since ever received. This took place at Golgotha. It was then and there that all the waves and billows of Jehovah's wrath against sin went

over His sinless Spirit causing Him to utter that agonising cry, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"'Twas then that He who knew no sin,  
 Stood in the sinner's place,  
 Drank the fierce wrath of God, and felt  
 The hiding of His face."

That baptism was never experienced by any other but Himself; and it is to it that the third of the five baptisms of Matthew clearly points, viz., the baptism of the quickened and cleansed believer. This baptism is *in* water unto the threefold name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. xxviii. 19). It sets forth in appropriate and impressive symbolism the believer's mystical union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Beloved reader, have you been buried with Him by baptism unto death, and raised to walk with Him in newness of life? If not, why not? Is it because His command is not sufficiently clear and explicit? Is it not binding upon all who would be truly His disciples? What doth hinder thee from being baptised? Has fear, shame, or unbelief to rule instead of the example and command of thy Lord? Give Him joy, beloved. Give Him joy by thy alacrity in obeying his behest. "Arise and be baptised." The fourth baptism is that of "fire" (Matt. iii. 10-12). In His character of Judge, Christ is the baptiser. The element is not water, neither the Spirit, but judgment. The subjects are not the children of God, but the children of the evil one. The time of this judgment is not now but in the future. It will begin with Israel. "He will thoroughly purge *His floor*, and gather the wheat into His garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." It will next reach the nations of the earth. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming *fire*, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 7-9). There will be other stages of this baptism of fire ending with the judgment of the "lake of fire" into which we cannot now enter. One thing is absolutely certain, that not one true-born son of God will experience it, nor will one Christ-rejector escape it.

We now come to the baptism of the Spirit, which is His work in forming the one body

of which Christ is Head. We have in the Gospels the prophecy and promise of this baptism: in the Acts the initial stages of its accomplishment, and in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians the explanation thereof. John the Baptist prophesied of Christ as follows:—"He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost." A few days before His death our Lord turned that prophetic utterance into a promise, thus:—"John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised in the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts i. 5). This promise was fulfilled ten days after, as we find from the next chapter. That baptism was a Jewish one entirely. All who received the Holy Spirit were Jews. But when we come to the tenth and eleventh chapters of Acts, we find the record of a Gentile baptism. Peter, with his usual candour, recounting to the council at Jerusalem what took place at Casarea under his ministry there, said:—"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptised you with water; but ye shall be baptised in the Holy Ghost." Thus do we see that both Jew and Gentile were baptised in one Spirit into one body. The only remaining passage which speaks directly of this immersion is the following:—"For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 12). Thus we perceive that all who believed on the one God and Father of all, were by the one Lord baptised in one Spirit with one baptism, into one body, in order to possess one faith, and live in the realised blessing and power of the one hope—the coming of the Lord. We gather, then, that the baptism of the Spirit is His work of forming that new thing now on earth called "The Christ," composed only of forgiven and baptised souls. In those He dwells, and in doing so unites them to Christ, who is the Head of the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

It remains for us, then, but to say that, so far as the individual is concerned, this formative work of the Spirit is a once-for-all thing—never to be repeated; for the life into which it brings them is the life of Christ, the Head

of the New Creation. It is not for a joyous experience, nor power for service, but for membership in the mystical body. One child of God is as much baptised as another. The weakest, poorest, and most ignorant have received as deep an immersion into this blessed element as the strongest, richest, and most intelligent. Beloved, may we prove our baptism into the one body by "keeping the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." The drinking into the Spirit is something subsequent to baptism. That is a complete and perfect work; this is present and progressive. The former is what Christ does for each believer; the latter, what the believer does for himself. Drinking is the instrumental means of being *filled* with the Spirit. We mention this to show that just as many children of God, not rightly dividing the Word of Truth, make the baptism of the Spirit and fire one and the same thing, so very many confound the baptism of the Spirit with drinking into the same.

May the words of the blessed Lord—"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"—encourage us to drink deep and long of the blessed life-impacting and strength-giving element.

*(To be continued.)*

IN prayer it is better that our heart be without words than our words without heart.

SOME Christians don't appear to have as much wisdom as a hen. She leaves the chaff and picks up every grain of wheat. How often do saints forget all the wheat that may have been given at a meeting, and lay hold of any little bit of chaff; and, to judge by their conversation, the light or unguarded remark which, like chaff, was mixed with the wheat of solid truth, is the only thing retained or reported to others.

It is a marvellous fact that those very passages that men are most apt to believe uninspired are the ones which have received the sanction of Jesus Christ Himself. He makes reference to Lot's wife, who was turned to a pillar of salt; to the destruction from heaven of Sodom and Gomorrah; to Jonah and the whale.

## "GOD OVER ALL."

As seen in the closing scene of Christ's life.

JOHN xix.

[FIRST PAPER.]

"PILATE therefore took JESUS, and scourged Him."

Why! Wherefore did they thus unto JESUS? Not because He was guilty of anything; not because aught could be proved against Him; for Pilate himself had said, "I find in Him no fault" (chap. xviii. 38).

Why, then, was He scourged? To please the multitude. This was the shameful way in which our adorable LORD JESUS was treated; this the way in which the greatest of earthly judges acted towards "the Holy One of God!"

"Then Pilate therefore took JESUS, and scourged Him."

It is well, beloved in Christ, that we should ponder these words in our hearts—"scourged Him." This was not simply that stripes were laid upon Him; the word implies the most cruel and merciless laceration of the body of that Sinless One.

And we, who are His, do well to ponder that through all this our LORD JESUS had to pass *for our sakes*; that our hearts may go forth in lively gratitude to that Blessed One; for though these were only bodily sufferings, and, as such, but a small part of what He endured for us; yet they were real sufferings, and great, and entirely undeserved.

"And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head."

"A crown of thorns!" And those rude, rough men, we know, did not place it gently on that sacred brow. Their object was to give Him pain. They pressed it into Him till blood flowed from His holy head.

And this they did, not simply to torture and give Him pain; but in mockery of His kingly office (Mark xv. 15-21). In each of His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King, He was subjected to ignominious mockery at the hands of vile, wicked, infuriated men.

When actually on the cross, they mocked Him with regard to His priestly office, as the victim and the sacrifice—the Saviour of men—crying out in derision, "Save Thyself! If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

So also in regard to His prophetic office—

The men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophecy who it is that smote Thee. And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him.

So, you perceive, that Blessed One was mocked with regard to each of the offices which He sustained by the appointment of JEHOVAH, who had Himself "anointed" Him by the Holy Ghost.

"The soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon His head, and they put on Him"—also in bitter irony—"a purple robe,"—another symbol of royalty,—*"and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him."*

It is very remarkable how this man again and again confessed the innocence of the LORD JESUS; yet was so under the influence of the fear of man, that he delivered Him up to the will of His enemies, notwithstanding his own reiterated testimony to His guiltlessness.

Well has the Holy Spirit left it on record for our admonition that "the fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. xxix. 25).

How oft may we see, and experience the verification of these solemn words of Scripture!

If even the wicked Pilate had acted according to the voice of conscience and his own individual judgment, nothing would have been done to JESUS; He would have been set free. All the laws of moral rectitude demanded such a course of action, since Pilate knew no evil of Him, nor could any accusation be proved against Him. But, thinking of what others would say, he brought JESUS forth to suffer the will of His enemies, lest he should make them *his* foes instead. Pilate seems to have been a wicked, unjust tyrant; although not so far dead to all sense of good as to deny the spotless character of the One brought before his judgment-seat as a malefactor. But tyrannical oppressors are always cowards: a guilty conscience is easily filled with fears.

Pilate "feared the people"; and so he sought to "please them," and "delivered JESUS to their will."

If it were not thus, why, since he himself confessed that he *found no fault in Him*, did he not set Him free? He had not the courage to be true to his own convictions, but said to the wicked chief priests and officers, "Take ye Him, and crucify Him!" adding, "for I find no fault in Him." "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto JESUS, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto Him"—the pride of his heart breaking forth, and revealing his true character,—*"Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and power to release Thee?"*

And now, beloved in Christ, ponder, I pray you, the answer given to him by that Blessed One—

*"Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above."*

Thus it was that the Lord Jesus comforted Himself in this hour of deep trial. He received all as by the ordering, the permission of God, His Father; yea, it was by God's permission that that man Pilate held his boasted place and power in the land, else could he not have been there. The Lord Jesus Christ took everything as out of the hands of God, His Father. The language of His heart ever was—"The cup which MY FATHER hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

Now this is a very important lesson for us. As He comforted Himself in trial, just so may we, by receiving everything that comes as from God, at least permitted by Him, and therefore sure to issue in blessing.

We should take trials, however bitter, as David took the curses of Shimei: "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day" (2 Samuel xvi. 10, 11, 12). We must say to ourselves: "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good." There is a cause for this; that man would have his mouth shut up, and sealed for ever if God did not permit him to speak thus; that malicious act could never

have been carried out if God had willed otherwise; there is a "needs be" for it; it is well.

*"Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above."*

With this assurance the man of God comforts himself, even as did JESUS, when, as Man, He sojourned among us.

Oh! do strive to see "the finger of God" in everything. This is the secret of going peacefully and quietly through the world. It may be some of you are sorely tried and afflicted, in this way, or in that. You may be injured and maligned by wicked men. But oh! do remember that this could not be without the permission of the very One who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for you," thus giving you the greatest possible proof of His love. If He has *thus* loved you, you cannot doubt His love will overrule all that befalls you, however distressing now, for ultimate good and blessing.

But observe further; while He says of Pilate "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above," He adds, "*therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.*"

He does not ignore the sin of either party; He does not lose sight of the instrumental cause of His sufferings. This is to be particularly noticed, because carnal reasoning would say, "Then, if such an one has no power at all against Christ and His saints, why is he to be blamed?"

Yea, he *is* blameworthy. The secret counsel and will of God is one thing. Human instrumentality and responsibility is another.

We must not confound things that differ, but keep them distinct.

It is said concerning the crucifixion of the LORD JESUS that He was taken "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"; yet was it "*by wicked hands*" that this Sinless One was "crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23). We must not forget on the one hand the overruling providence of God; yet must we always look also on the instrumentality used.

To deny the wickedness of an act because it is permitted by God for His own wise and loving purposes, is nothing less than practical infidelity.

If we do not see the wicked act of an

ungodly man as a distinct thing, subservient to, but at the same time not in conformity with, the will of God, we attribute evil to God!

Only the carnal mind will ever be found reasoning thus; and "the carnal mind," we know, is "enmity against God." Let us beware of this sin. It is one thing to be the instigator of evil; and quite another thing to "overcome evil with good." Those wicked Jews fulfilled the voices of their own prophets, which were read every Sabbath-day, in condemning God's Son, and desiring of Pilate that He should be slain (Acts xiv. 27, 28, 29).

But observe: they did the will of God unwittingly, and in spite of themselves, as we say; it was their own evil will they were bent on fulfilling all the while.

*(To be continued.)*

### "A FITLY-SPOKEN WORD."

UPON the first day of the week, the Lord gathers His people unto His name. The object is to remember Him. He gave, ere He left the earth, an example, where He presided as the dispenser. It is so still; though absent to sight, yet to faith He is "in the midst." While thus gathered, He may choose whom He pleases to convey words of love or cheer, exhortation or warning, which, when so sent, strike a chord in every believing heart, and are always to edification. In the assembly of the Lord there is no room for the flesh. It ought to be judged in every individual by himself, that as a purged and contrite-hearted people we might surround His table. It is most painful to sit and hear an address given out of harmony or not in keeping with the object of our gathering; and equally so to listen to one attempting to teach far beyond his knowledge and capacity, when gathered unto the name of the Lord. We ought to remember the words of Solomon, "A word spoken in his season, how good it is." It finds an echo and response in the hearts of the hearers. In order that we may be able to do this we ought to mark well Prov. xxii. 17, 18. The ear bowed down to hear the words of the wise, and kept within, till they are fitted in the lips. If we do this we shall know the truth of Prov. xxv. 11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." G. C.

## THE GLORIOUS CHANGE.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE  
TO THE CORINTHIANS, BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

Chap. xv. 50 to 57.

THE world has a proverb, "As sure as death!" And indeed death is "sure" to the unbeliever. But it is not applicable to all: death is by no means a certainty to those who are in Christ. In verse 50 we read "**we shall not all sleep.**" Resurrection is Christ's triumph over all opposing forces. He could not be holden of death. The gates of Hades could not prevail against Him, neither can they prevail against His Church. I do not believe that the angel was sent to take the great stone from the sepulchre in order to let the Lord come out, but rather to let His loved ones look in. Resurrection is the undoing of all that sin and Satan have wrought. Nevertheless I believe that the glory of Christ's triumph over death and the power of darkness would not be complete if it was not demonstrated that through His atoning work He had secured the right and title to exempt from death entirely those who believe in Him. This I take to be one of God's great purposes in this "mystery."

There is evidence that this thought has been in the mind of God from the very beginning. The death of Adam took place in the year 930 from the creation. That of Seth in the year 1042. Midway between the two—viz., in the year 987, *i.e.*, before a second recorded death (excepting that of Cain which must have been at a very early period) had taken place—an event occurred which was at once an earnest and a pledge of this triumph. Enoch was translated—without tasting death!

The translation of Elijah is, as it were, a second witness to the same purpose. Such is the completeness of the redemption accomplished by the Lord Jesus, that He has the right, if God so wills it, at any moment to take to Himself His redeemed without their passing through even the shadow of dying.

It is a blessed thought that even to-night

our Lord may come and fulfil to us this blessed purpose.

"I know not when my Lord may come;  
I know not how nor where;  
If I shall pass the vale of death,  
Or meet Him in the air."

"But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day."

"**We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed**" (verse 51). The word here rendered "changed" is very significant. It is the same that occurs in Heb. i. 12, where referring to the heavens which are now, we read "as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall *be changed.*" The force of the word is such as almost to amount to "*exchanged.*" It is a *change* so radical, so complete, that it is equivalent to the change that is wrought upon all other saints by the process of death and resurrection.

"**In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,**" this change will be wrought, which shall place all who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord upon the same footing and in the same immortal and incorruptible condition as those who have been asleep for a thousand years and are raised from among the dead.

The apostle calls this "a mystery." We do not read anywhere of resurrection being a mystery. The fact that it transcends all the power of human intellect does not constitute it a mystery. The scriptural significance of the word "mystery" is rather, that which has been kept secret, closely veiled, until the time arrives for it to be told out.

Resurrection was a fundamental article in the belief of all devout Jews, and was clearly seen by them in the Old Testament scriptures. But no such thought is expressed by human lip or pen as that which is here made known, "**Behold, I show you a mystery!**" GLORIOUS CHANGE! Have you and I a right to expect it? I unhesitatingly answer, Yes. The apostle used the word "*we,*" and so may I. Have you bought a lair in a graveyard? Are you a member of a funeral society? Are you like the men of the world, saying in your heart, "Yes, I shall die, as all before me have died"? Are you as certain you shall die as if the blessed words had never been written, the mystery never told out, "We shall not all sleep"?

Then might not the Lord upbraid us as He did the disciples of old: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe"?

"**At the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound.**" We have just read of "the first man" and "the last man." Here the expression "last trump" may fitly be contrasted with that former trump which heralded Jehovah's advent to Sinai, when the ministration of condemnation and death was promulgated.

In 1 Thess. iv. 10 we read of the Lord Himself descending with "the trump of God." Some have sought to identify this "last trump" with the seventh trumpet in the book of Revelation. The absurdity of this hardly needs refutation, were it not that some hold it tenaciously, and build upon it as their foundation a series of doctrines equally erroneous.

The Seals, Vials, Trumpets of Revelation, are all symbolical, and cannot otherwise be interpreted. And even if they had been prophecies to be literally fulfilled instead of the symbolisms of a vision, it would have been manifestly absurd for the apostle to refer in a letter to the Corinthian church to prophecies not yet uttered and to a book not yet written.

But very glorious is the expression when viewed in contrast to the Sinai trump. That was the heralding of condemnation and death—this the heralding of the Resurrection and the Life. The first trump sounded "Cursed"—as its awful tones prolonged and loud caused Israel to quake and fear. The last trump sounds only blessing as it summons the dead to life and the living to immortality.

"**And the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed**" (verse 52). The first act that shall take place on that august occasion will be the raising of the dead. This is confirmed by reference to 1 Thess. iv.—"The dead in Christ shall rise first"—and in the passage before us the order is strictly maintained.

"**For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**" Corruption pertains to the dead: mortality pertains to the living. Therefore the first act concerns the dead, and is accomplished in resurrection—the corruptible puts on incorruption. The next act concerns the living, and is accomplished in the glorious "change"—the mortal puts on immortality. Thus the whole elect congregation are by the power of the

Lord the Saviour fitted for the glories of the Father's House—their Eternal home. All alike beyond the reach of both mortality and corruption, all alike possessed of immortality and incorruptibility.

"**Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.**"

The victory of Christ is by no means complete when a saint, however peacefully and blessedly, departs to be with Him. So long as the enemy retains a hair of the head of one of the ransomed of the Lord as a trophy of what sin has wrought, His victory is not complete. I love to think that when at last the glorious consummation arrives, there will not be left in Satan's grasp a single particle of redeemed dust for him to show as a trophy of his former sway! Much that has been written about the believer's triumph in death is both true and precious. We would not undervalue it. But it is mostly written from the human standpoint—the blessing secured to us. It is when we rise to the Divine standpoint and look at the glory that must be brought to Christ, that we see how far the blessed Hope of His appearing transcends the blessedness of the believer's departure through death.

"**O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**" This is the triumphant shout of one whose faith is resting on no sandy foundation of human righteousness or carnal ordinances; but upon the infallible word of the living God.

Does He speak of death as beautiful to contemplate? Verily, no. It cannot be; it never was intended to be anything but a hideous monster.

Poets have written of it as an angel and a friend, and doubtless it has come as such to many a weary sufferer. But in itself it is necessarily and properly abhorrent to our whole being. Like a serpent whose sting has been extracted, we cease to dread it, we know it cannot harm us, but nevertheless we loathe it. Dying grace is given for dying hours, and till then we may rest content, knowing that He who is faithful will not fail us.

Thanks be to God, for every one who believes in the Lord Jesus, that sting which makes the bravest a coward has been certainly and for ever withdrawn. "The sting of death is sin." Blessed indeed is the deliverance that



so brings peace to the troubled heart and silences the guilty conscience.

The youngest believer as well as the oldest, the weakest as well as the strongest, can in the confidence of faith take up the exultant song: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The sting of death is sin. The strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

### THE OPENING YEAR.

IT seems but yesterday since, with glad hearts, we greeted each other with the annual salutation, "A Happy New Year." Short as the time has seemingly been, twelve long months have come and gone; and, as we look backward, our hearts are moved with mingled feelings of sorrow and thanksgiving. Sorrow, as we think of our utter failure; thanksgiving, as we think of the kindness of God each step of the journey.

Each one of us has had our own peculiar experiences, both in joys and in sorrows. Sometimes with exulting spirit we have sung and rejoiced over some great deliverance, though the clouds had betokened a bitter *Marah* experience (Exod. xv. 23). Thus was brought out the depravity of our own hearts, as we murmured against our good God; but blessed be His holy name, our murmuring only brought forth His wondrous wisdom and grace, as He led us to the cooling streams and shady groves of *Elim* (Exod. xv. 27), where we found most precious refreshment and shade for our weary souls.

As we think of friends and acquaintances with whom we began the year, some have passed away; and we are thus brought face to face with the fact, that "Man that is born of a woman is of *few days* and full of sorrow" (Job xiv. 1). Further, we cannot but remember that, sooner or later, we ourselves must pass off this changing scene and enter on the eternal.

For weal or woe, unsaved reader, your hopes were high as you entered the "new year"; but alas, the things of time have not turned out what you expected, and now you stand upon the threshold of another new year. Our humble advice is, let it begin with God, take from Him the great "new-year" gift He

seeks to bestow upon you. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

Again, some of the children of God began the year happy in His love; but as the weeks have rolled on, they have become more "like those that *go down* to the pit," and to-day they can scarcely be distinguished from the open worldling. If the reader be such a one, remember though the months have rolled on, and seasons have changed, and you also have sadly changed, your God remains the unchangeable "I AM"; and His word is, "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy." So "Arise and go to thy Father," remembering "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Perhaps you are one who has trusted Jesus since the year began. Then we would remind you of our position in the world: *in* it, yet not *of* it. Jesus calls His own "the men which Thou gavest Me *out of* the world." (John xvii. 6). And He would ever have us separate from it in all its varied allurements. Lean upon the breast of your Lord like John, and listen with all earnestness to His loving voice; and, amid all the conflicting sounds which greet our ears, we shall thus be able in the confusion to know His voice as He leads us onward, saying, "Follow thou Me." (John xxi. 22). E. F. C.

### MOTTO FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

#### Our Past—Lost and Guilty.

"Astray like lost sheep" (Psalm cxix. 176). "All the world . . . guilty" (Rom. iii. 19).

#### Our Present—Saved and Justified.

"God, who hath saved us" (2 Tim. i. 8, 9). "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii. 33).

#### Our Future—Christ and Glory.

"To be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). "Ye shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday (PAST), to-day (PRESENT), and for ever (FUTURE)." (Heb. xiii. 8).

"I have loved you," John xiii. 34 (PAST). "I will never leave thee," Hebrews xiii. 5 (PRESENT). "I will come again and receive you," John xiv. 3 (FUTURE). HY. P.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM  
MR. W. G. SMITH, TOKYO, JAPAN.

17th October, 1889.

LAST Sunday morning only one of the cadets came to read the Bible with me; the previous Sunday, six or seven; the previous week, seven or eight. This irregularity of attendance on the part of many who have shown much interest is disappointing. Young men who seem in a hopeful state may keep away for weeks and months. But, on the other hand, it is a marvel that so much has been done, unhindered by Satan; and there must surely be much fruit from the much seed that has been sown. Occasionally one person only comes, and then it almost seems as if the Lord had kept others away, in order to let that one be taught individually. The youths and young men from the Kyoritzugakko give much more apparent promise, though there is the same dropping off amongst them also of those who have attended for a time regularly. Sometimes, however, these come back, and I find they have been away from Tokyo, or have been unwell, or some relation or guardian has required their services at home. . . . Do not believe all the glowing statements you see in print about Japan. There is a very long letter in a prominent English religious paper, of 16th August, written from Tokyo, which speaks about the assassination of Viscount Mari, and adds, "Christianity thus being robbed of its only baptised believer in high official circles." The letter goes on to speak of a great Young Men's Christian Association work begun in Japan, and saying it is contemplated to erect buildings in Tokyo, in connection therewith, to cost £12,000, of which sum £5,000 has already been subscribed in America. Well, it is quite true that Viscount Mari was baptised; but it is also true that he became a Swedenborgian, and then an Agnostic, and that he was buried publicly by heathen priests. I myself saw the funeral. His influence was well known to be *against* Christianity in the schools throughout the country, he being Minister of Education. There are marvellous openings for the Gospel, but the Devil is not dead. When the Christians at Nūgata started a Young Men's Christian Association, and began building, the Buddhists started a similar religious association for their young men, and began building. Unless the Bible is given its true place in Japan, Japanese Christianity will be the Christianity of Europe, a thing that sends up a stink in the nostrils of God. There is the same disinclination on the part of many here to take their stand on the inspired words of God that there is at home. I believe it is the same in other mission fields. Why, then, don't some of the best men and women in our assemblies give themselves to foreign mission work? If some of the time and labour men devoted to well-fed assemblies at home were bestowed on starving people abroad, a better day would come for the Christians at home as well as for the millions living in darkness in other lands. Believers are keen to argue on questions of church order; I wish they would pay a little more attention to a command which it may cost a good deal to obey, but a command about which there can be little disputing: "Go ye therefore, and *make disciples of all the nations*, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching *them* to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt.

xxviii. 19, 20). Some believers at home are very anxious—and rightly so—that persons who are already children of God should observe "*all things*" that are commanded; and they are indignant that so much disobedience should be found amongst Christians. But if those brethren are truly zealous for the keeping of God's commandments, let them remember the outside millions who have never yet heard that primary and weightiest command of all, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." We are supposed to believe that the heathen are going to hell; but the belief has not, as a rule, much practical effect upon us. In the face of this indifference, I do not wonder that the general mass of Christians is being leavened by the comforting thought that, after all, things are not as bad in reality as old-fashioned theories would lead us to suppose. We need not trouble about hell. "Thou shalt *not* surely die" is the gospel for those who wish to please themselves instead of pleasing God. If people do believe that the heathen are going to hell, why don't they give earnest prayer and abundant sympathy and plentiful money, yes, and personal service, towards telling to them the goodness of salvation through Christ? The people wanted abroad are those who are already workers at home. I have seen the notice in England, "Rubbish may be shot here"; but I do not want to see the same notice displayed, metaphorically, in heathen lands. What I felt in Spain I feel here: it is those who "cannot be spared" at home that are needed abroad. Good nerves and a good digestion are no small qualifications for missionary work, together with the ability to do with a very small circle of foreign society, or without any such circle at all. . . . I seem to be doing a little, and the need is so great; but God has imposed mental and physical limits, to pass which would mean a breakdown. Such cases have not been unfrequent in Japan. . . . There is a youth of 18, named Kadita, formerly my pupil at the Kyoritzugakko, from whom I expect a good deal. When he first came to the meeting, he had never opened a Bible; and now I have every reason to believe that he is truly converted. He talks to others and brings others to the meetings; and, entirely of his own accord, he sometimes comes and spends three hours in the evening, helping me with an English and Japanese dictionary I am making for my own private use. It is delightful to see his interest in the Scriptures, and the intelligence he displays (others display much intelligence also), as we consider the types of Christ in Genesis, and the doctrines taught in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. Last Sunday night I had fifteen at the Bible-class, all but two or three young men; and most of them present or former Kyoritzugakko pupils. I believe that God will yet raise up a band of young men who will be a blessing to their native land. The meetings on Sunday and Thursday evenings last from seven till nine o'clock, and we sing five hymns through—we have had as many as eight. Later on, when some of these are brought out to the Lord and His Name only, I trust we shall have a Mission Hall, with meetings and singing in Japanese, for everything at present is done in English. It may seem strange that I have not yet done much at the language, but I have been satisfied to take my time about this, because there is plenty of work to do in English; and to have wrought hard at an extremely difficult language, while pretty active in other directions, would have been too much for my strength.

## HOW TO ACT 'MID FAILURE.

**A** MIDST the changing scenes and sounds of the passing season, we would commend to your prayerful meditation the threefold prayer of Moses, the man of God, which he pleaded *amidst the scene of failure and sin* which had called forth the righteous indignation of Jehovah in Exodus xxxii. and xxxiii. The Lord had shown him grace, and promised him great reward; so, taking the intercessor's place, Moses pleaded:—

First.—*That he might know THE WAY of the Lord.* And how essential it is for us *all* to know the way of the Lord. Ignorant as to this we are in danger of wasting a lifetime of precious opportunities for glorifying God, of causing dishonour to His name, and bringing trouble upon our own souls. May our daily prayer to the Lord be: “I pray Thee, since I have found grace in Thy sight, show we now *Thy way.*”

Second.—Moses pleaded *that he might realise THE PRESENCE of the Lord.* It is blessed to be in the way of the Lord; but more blessed still is it to realise the intimate *companionship* of the Lord in that way. What sweet communings of spirit are enjoyed when the saint walks in the unclouded sunshine of holy fellowship with the Lord! and what a pledge of constant victory is *His presence!* “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Verily, we may say with the man on the mount, “If *Thy presence* go not, carry us not up hence.”

Third.—Communion with the Lord gives boldness in request; so we find Moses thus entreating the Lord: “I beseech Thee, show me **THY GLORY.**” Bold indeed was the request, and in so far as Moses was able to bear it, the request was granted. The Lord cannot withhold the bright display of His very glory from a soul really *in communion.* Oh, if we do but *walk with God,* He will keep nothing from us. John, *on the bosom* of the Lord, could get at the secrets of His Master's heart; while others were powerless to discover them. He that walks most with Christ will know most of the *glory* of Christ. May the acceptable prayer of each reader during the present year be: “I beseech Thee, Lord, show me **THY WAY.** Reveal to me **THY PRESENCE,** and display to me **THY GLORY.**” Amen. H.

## LIBERTY OF MINISTRY, AND ITS ABUSES.

**I**T is important that the saints of God should keep in mind those blessed truths on which they have acted, in having separated themselves from various unscriptural systems.

The Church of God is composed of living members; even of such as have been taught to know the sin-atonement value of the blood of Christ, through the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. Being quickened by the Spirit, they are as “living stones,” then, *built together;* God, the Holy Ghost, not only dwelling in each individual member, but abiding *with* them; constituting *them* “an habitation of God, through *the Spirit*” (Eph. ii. 22); ruling and ordering all things among *them* (as a collected “body”) during the absence of the Lord Jesus.

The twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is an all-important chapter on this subject. We have there, first, the acknowledging of Jesus as “the Lord,” as that which proves a man to be quickened by the Holy Ghost. “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” We have, then, this truth taught; that by one Spirit we are all *baptised into one body.* This “body” is composed of various members, all members not having the same office, for the Spirit *divideth to every man severally as He will.* But let not the “feeble” members say they are not “necessary”; for the Spirit of God says, and oh, it is a precious word!—“the Head (Jesus) cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you”; so thoroughly has He united His people to Himself. “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” (Eph. v. 29, 30). This truth, as to the Spirit acting sovereignly in the body, when received in power, clears out at once all *system,* which is—*man* assuming to do that in the Church which is the office of *the Holy Ghost alone.*

The proper position of saints, then, according to the Word of God, is to meet together recognising the personal presence of the Holy Ghost, who divideth “*as He will*” to various members, and is the only Sovereign Guide, as Christ is the only Lord, among the saints.

Hearty subjection to God, and subjection one to the other, in brotherly love, and the

fear of God—especially of the *younger* to the *elder* brethren (1 Pet. v. 5)—is that which would ensure “all things” being done “*decently*, and in *order*” (1 Cor. xiv. 40).

It is where *self-will* takes advantage of this “liberty” (see Gal. v. 13), using it as “an occasion to the flesh,” that Satan does much mischief; puffing up the one who is using himself; grieving the saints; grieving the Spirit; and dishonouring the Lord.

This is the *abuse*. Liberty of ministry may be thus abused. “How is it to be remedied?” Surely, *by waiting upon God*—happy, child-like waiting upon God. We must not “*do evil* that good may come.” We must not make an “order” of our own. We know but little of the *suppressing power* that would be felt in a meeting where the saints *really waited upon God*. Then, if God were to lead a brother to say but “five words,” there would be *power*, and the saints would feel it (1 Cor. xiv. 19, 25).

### HARDENED.

WHAT are known as petrifying waters have the property of turning the softest bit of wood, immersed therein for a time, to the hardness of stone.

Sin indulged by the Christian produces a like result. He who at one time was impressionable to the slightest touch of God’s Word, becomes seared and past feeling. Profession may be as loud as ever; but the ways of such become a grief to the godly, and an offence to Christ.

Genesis xxxv. opens with a call from God to Jacob, that he should go up to Bethel, there dwell, and there rear his altar to God. The word from God searched Jacob as to his present condition. Hence Jacob’s call to his household to put away their strange gods and be clean. Sad it is when such a state of matters exists as is here shown, but the readiness with which the strange gods were given up proved their hearts were yet tender. The favour of God was upon them, in that He made their way safe. As for the strange gods, they were left behind, buried under the great oak at Shechem.

Turning to Joshua xxiv., we find Israel, now a mighty nation, called together to Shechem

to hear the last words of Joshua, their mighty captain. In their ears he recounted the goodness of God unto them, and earnestly besought them to put away their strange gods and serve the Lord only. Again and again did they respond, saying, “We will serve the Lord only.” But although Joshua stood under the great oak, under which the gods of Jacob’s household were buried, he got no others to lay beside them. The incidents point their own solemn lesson. Sin indulged had resulted in the hardening being fully wrought, and now it might be said of them, “They feared the Lord and served their own gods.” “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. iii. 12, 13).

P. H.

CALVARY is the cloudless sky; by faith we look through it and see the *heart of God*.

LOVABLE CHRISTIANS.—Regarding your lovable or loving Christian, I was impressed with two verses in John xiv. the other day. Verse 23, then in verse 31, the Lord showed the world that He *loved* the Father by *doing* as He gave commandment, &c. S. N.

### Correspondence.

“WORLDS” OR “AGES” (Heb. i. 2).

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

I AM not a Greek scholar, and therefore cannot argue the point on that ground; but I venture to believe, notwithstanding, that the word means the universe, and I am confirmed in this by Heb. iii. 4. It is the glory of the Son, as the Creator and Upholder of all things, that is set forth in the first chapter, and in the third chapter His accessory glory as Son over His own house; vastly, yea, infinitely superior to Moses, who built the tabernacle, for He is the builder of the universe (“all things”), of which the tabernacle was a figure, and “He that has built all things is God.” If I may be allowed, I will give an extract from “Synopsis,” by J. N. D.:—“A particular interpretation has by some been given to the word (Greek) translated ‘worlds’; but it is certain that the word is used by the Seventy, *i.e.*, in the Hellenist or Scriptural Greek, for the physical worlds. There cannot, I think, be a doubt, from the Jewish use of this expression (see Schœtgen and many others), that this means the universe” (New Testament, New Translation).

G. A. S.

## A LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA.

Care of Mr. Charles Montgomery,  
227 Second Street, San Francisco, California.

4th November, 1880.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—In my last letter I intimated to you our intention of removing from Orillia, where we have resided for five years. Previous to our departure, at a farewell tea-meeting, attended by Christians from various assemblies of Northern Ontario, we were commended to God in prayer.

On Friday evening, September 20th, we left on the Canadian Pacific Railway for Winnipeg (Mrs. M. and I), and after a journey of sixty hours we reached the metropolis of Manitoba and the North-west territory. We spent over a week in Winnipeg, seeking to help the little company gathered out to the precious Name, and preach the Gospel to the perishing. Winnipeg is a city of 25,000 inhabitants, and is only about fourteen or fifteen years old. The Governor-General of Canada paid a visit when we were there. I also spent a night at Selkirk, a town on the Red River, twenty miles east of Winnipeg. An assembly of believers, fifteen to twenty in fellowship, sustain an active and aggressive Gospel work among the half-breeds, Indians, and white people. A Chippewa chief is in their fellowship, likewise his son, an intelligent Government school teacher, recently saved. The latter, on the night of my visit, addressed the people, who were mostly Cree and Chippewa Indians and half-breeds, in Cree, and I followed in English. The chief's son appears to be an earnest, humble Christian worker; he can speak fluently in Cree, Chippewa, and English. Attempts have been made to secure his services in the interests of a sect, but hitherto he has persistently refused to entertain any such proposals. One of the brethren in the Selkirk assembly (formerly in fellowship in London, England) is deeply interested in the welfare of the Indians, and purposes giving up his business, in order to take a Government school (Indian), and devote his spare time to looking after their spiritual welfare. There are tens of thousands of Indians in Canada who are as ignorant of the Gospel of Christ as the inhabitants of Central Africa. We spent a few days at Brandon, the second largest city in Manitoba, 150 miles west of Winnipeg. There we were glad to meet many old friends from Ontario. Twelve months ago our brother, John Rae, moved with his wife and family from Portage La Prairie to Brandon. Previous to his arrival there was no gathering. After twelve months of labour, and with the arrival of a number of others formerly in fellowship elsewhere, there is now an assembly of over thirty in fellowship. Mr. Rae has had the hearty co-operation of a number of earnest, active young brethren, one of whom (Richard Varder) has gone out in the work. Most of the Benner family, after five years' failure of crops in Southern Manitoba, have moved to, and reside in or near, Brandon. On Monday night, October 7th, we took the C. P. Railway to Vancouver, British Columbia, a journey of 1600 miles. Under the good hand of our God, we safely reached the western terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway, 3000 miles long, on Thursday afternoon. The trip through the prairies was most uninteresting; for 200 miles we did not see a single tree. After passing Ceelgarry, in the province of

Alberta, the scenery was strikingly grand and majestic. For many miles the road lay through the Rocky Mountains and Selkirk Range. Mountains ten thousand feet high rose up before us, with snow-clad tops. On the side of Mount Stephen, on the summit of the Rockies, where we stopped for a short time, we saw a glacier, said to be 800 feet thick.

At Vancouver station we were met by a brother known to us, from Brockville, Ontario, whose guests we were the two days we spent in the city. Vancouver has had a phenomenal growth. Four years ago its population was 600; now it is 14,000, and has forty hotels. Most of the time was spent by me in looking up persons who had formerly been in fellowship with Christians gathered to the Name of the Lord in other places. I found twelve brethren and sisters, who had been in assemblies in Wimbledon, Glasgow, Winnipeg, Hamilton (Scotland), New Zealand, and various parts of Ontario. We had a meeting on Friday night in a Christian's house, and after being introduced to one another, and having prayer together, we had a Bible-reading on the ground of gathering. On Lord's-day eight came together and remembered the Lord in the breaking of bread. I am glad to say that the brethren "continue steadfast." What a pity it is that so many of God's people, who gather in the Name of the Lord in the British Isles, should move to distant parts without doing their best to obtain all available information as to whether there are scripturally-gathered assemblies or not.

On the Saturday we left Vancouver by steamer and reached Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. There are between twenty and thirty in fellowship in the assembly in Victoria. Close on twenty of us assembled on Lord's-day morning. Christians who were formerly in fellowship in England, Scotland, Ontario, Australia, and South America, remember the Lord together in the breaking of bread. After a few meetings for Christians, and a Gospel meeting on Lord's-day evening, we left for San Francisco on Wednesday afternoon; and after a prosperous voyage we reached the Golden Gate on Saturday morning, making the trip of 833 miles in seventy-five hours. On the Wednesday following, the "Third Annual California Conference of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ" was announced to commence. The meetings began on the evening of Wednesday, October 8th, and closed on Lord's-day evening. The attendance, though not large, was encouraging. Our brother, Donald Munro, was the principal speaker. The Word was ministered in freshness and power, and God's people were humbled, refreshed, and encouraged. Brethren James Goodfellow, Charles Montgomery, and others, took part. Brother Munro since then has conducted a week's Bible-readings in addition to taking part in nightly Gospel meetings. He left this morning for Los Angeles (500 miles south), expecting to be at the Chicago Believers' Meetings in the latter part of this month. Three years ago there were less than a dozen gathered to the Name of the Lord in San Francisco; there are now between forty and fifty in fellowship, and at Oakland, on the other side of the bay, there is an assembly of between thirty and forty. Three or four years ago Mr. Charles Montgomery, formerly in fellowship with our (so-called) "exclusive" brethren, and an earnest, active gosseller,

brought the news of the Pacific Coast before our aged but energetic brother, Donald Ross. Brother Ross and a fellow-worker, James Goodfellow, and Mr. Montgomery, laboured and toiled, and God blessed their efforts in various parts of the State. D. Munro, J. K. M'Ewen, and other brethren, have likewise been blessed. J. Goodfellow and I are continuing Gospel meetings here nightly in the Gospel Hall, 1044 Howard Street, between 6th and 7th.

The weather is most delightful, and reminds one of July weather in England or Scotland. "Every prospect pleases, but only man is vile." This is the most openly ungodly city I was ever in. Theatres and saloons are in full blast on Lord's-days; stores are opened, and men are to be seen on all hands working. There are about 40,000 Chinese in San Francisco. It is quite a sight to visit "Chinatown." There is a splendid field here for any whom the Lord has called to labour among the Chinese. Pray for me that I may be blessed of the Lord, and be used by Him in His most blessed and honourable service. The Lord willing, I expect during the winter to evangelise on the Pacific coast—in California and British Columbia.

Hoping to be in Scotland in time for the summer's Gospel campaign,—Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus, our soon-coming Lord,  
ALEXANDER MARSHALL.

## 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 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.

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:—

Should a child of God enlist or become a soldier?

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?

Who and what were the Nicolaitanes; and to whom does the term refer in the prophetic aspect of the seven epistles to the churches of Asia?

What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for *introducing* those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them?

Please explain the apparent contradiction between 2 Sam. xxiv. 24 ("fifty shekels of silver") and 1 Chron. xxi. 24, 25 ("six hundred shekels of gold").

Is it scriptural to call "the Lord's Table" "the Father's Table"?

### THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

**QUESTION 339.**—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?

**Ans.**—The prophecy of this baptism was committed to the baptist (Matt. iii. 2), whilst the promise was given by the Baptist Himself, after His resurrection from among the dead (Acts i. 5). The initial stage of its fulfilment took place at Jerusalem (Acts ii.), when three thousand Jews were, under the preaching of the apostles, brought to own Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Christ. Another stage in its accomplishment was reached when Peter proclaimed the forgiveness of sins, through the risen Christ, to Cornelius and his household at Cesarea (Acts x.; xi. 15-18). The former was a Jewish immersion, whilst the latter was a Gentile one, according to the Divine principle, "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." It is left for the apostle to the latter to explain its meaning. This he does in his letter to the Corinthians—"For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body" (Cor. xii. 12, R.V.). The baptism of the Spirit (not the Spirit's baptism: He is not the Baptist—Christ is that—He is the baptismal element) is, therefore, His work (under Christ) of forming the one body of which the glorified Throne-filler is the Head. This immersion was not pre-Pentecostal. We search the Scriptures in vain for anything approaching to it in either Patriarchal or Mosaic times; and it will be entirely absent from the Spirit's operations in the age of the reign of righteousness. It is altogether unique and peculiar to this age. It is a once-for-all operation, taking place when souls hear the word of truth, the Gospel of their salvation (Eph. i. 13). It is never repeated, being complete and perfect, and hence we never find the plural, "baptisms," mentioned. Therefore, there can be no "scriptural authority to pray for such"; to do so would at least betray a lack of intelligence on the subject. With regard to the second part of the question, let me say, whilst every child of God has received the Spirit to domicile within them, no matter how weak, ignorant, or obtuse they may be, yet all have not the same measure of the Spirit's power and fulness; all are not "full of the Holy Ghost," up to the Divine ideal. Being "filled" depends upon the instrumental means of drinking in the Spirit by meditation, prayer, and faith (John vii.

37-39; Eph. v. 10), and not "as we overcome sin"; that will result from the energy of the Spirit within us, as effect flows out of cause. To seek victory over sin, in order to obtain the fullness of the Spirit, is like a patient seeking to make himself well before sending for a medical man. The filling will be in proportion as it is sought for in a humble, honest, and scriptural manner; and victory over the foes of spiritual life and progress will be in exact ratio to the measure of His energy abiding in and flowing through the believer.

J. H. I.

### THE HOLY KISS.

**QUESTION 340.**—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)?

**Ans.**—In Eastern lands the kiss was, and still is, the ordinary mode of familiar salutation. This was not to be a Judas, or deceitful or hypocritical formality, but "hearty." The force of the teaching lies in the adjective, and refers to all salutations of whatever form.

O. B.

**Note.**—The grace of God does not come in to overturn or set aside the ordinary customs and courtesies prevalent in any nation or age, in so far as these are not essentially simple but regulate, refine, and elevate them.

The Lord Jesus accepted such and countenanced them. The anointing and the washing; the kiss and the embrace; the marriage festival and the funeral obsequies are all left by Him as He found them.

We judge that had He lived in our day and land He would have acted on the same principle, and that, therefore, the inspired instructions, which come to us with His authority from the pen of the apostle, must be understood and applied upon like principles.

Thus the washing of the feet, of John xiii., corresponds with any service, however lowly, that would refresh and help a fellow-saint.

So also the kiss corresponds to the usual greeting of "shaking hands," a mode of salutation that admits of much expressiveness, from the cold and formal three-finger movement to the hearty grasp which comes from the heart, and is felt to be so.

Love and holiness are the qualities that should characterise all our intercourse, for "God is holy" and "God is love."—Ed.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO "STUDIES."

**QUESTION 341.**—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.?

**Ans. A.**—The important thing is to realise that, whether in our worldly callings or in preaching the Gospel, "we serve the Lord Christ"; that we "are not our own," having been "bought with a price"; that "whatsoever we do, in word or deed," we should "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," and "do it heartily as to the Lord." To "neglect" anything

which He has given us to do is to dishonour Him and grieve the Holy Spirit of God; but if He calls us to forsake our occupation and devote ourselves to His service in the Gospel, woe to us if we do not go. But the great thing is to be sure that He has called us; and this can only be ascertained by much waiting upon Him. It is not enough that we work FOR Him. If He is to be glorified, and our work approved of Him, we must work WITH Him. That "the time is short," and the coming of the Lord near, should make us in real earnest, but is not sufficient of itself to warrant anyone leaving their occupation, unless the Lord himself calls to it. May we be more in the Spirit of our Divine Master, as seen in Isaiah l. 4; John xii. 49, 50; and of His servant, as in Acts ix. 6.

G. A. S.

**Ans. B.**—Much depends on who the saints are. If under parents or guardians, it would be well if they allowed them to judge for them. Study is most valuable even to aged saints. If the studies are useless in God's service, and engaging in them by those capable of forming a sound judgment means neglect of work for God and study of His Word the answer is obvious. Choose ye whom ye will serve.

O. B.

**Note.**—To engage in some department of Gospel work and to study the Word of God are the privilege of all believers. To be so engrossed with any "studies" as to be precluded from engaging in either cannot be well-pleasing to God.

On the other hand, studies of various kinds are a necessity in order to efficiency in nearly every calling. Whatever the trade or profession to which a Christian is bound in the providence of God, it is his duty to qualify himself for it. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. ix. 10). "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks" (Prov. xxvii. 23). The "woman that feareth the Lord" (in Prov. xxxi.) is diligent, energetic, laborious, skilful. These passages are referred to not so much as being directly applicable, but rather to show the principle which runs through all Scripture; viz., that whatever be the daily calling of the child of God, it is consistent with the fear of the Lord and genuine spirituality to go about it diligently and efficiently.

For a physician to neglect the studies necessary to render him skilful, and yet to continue to practice medicine, would be seriously wrong. For one occupied in architecture, engineering, &c.,—occupations requiring a knowledge of higher arithmetic, mathematics, &c.,—to neglect to qualify himself by the necessary studies would be folly. It is not a question of "advancement in worldly position,"—he may abide in the same worldly and social position all his life,—but it is a question of acting creditably and efficiently in his calling.

Moreover, he may in all this, walk in the fear of the Lord, enjoy the study of the Word, and be a bright shining light, telling and living the Gospel everywhere he goes.

But for one who has received from the Lord the special call to give himself wholly to the Gospel work, to turn aside from that whereto he has been called to engage in studies with a view to worldly advancement would be inevitably to become lean and powerless, and to incur the displeasure and chastening of the Lord.—Ed.

## SAD TIDINGS FROM AFRICA.

BAILUNDU, 14th October, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER,—After a pause of nearly a month here in Bailundu, the appointed time for starting has come round, but not without its perplexities. Mr. Morris and Mr. Gall have both been very ill, but we trust now fairly convalescent. Dr. W. Fisher has also been down. Dr. George Fisher has been at Cilume to disband our men. To go on to Bihe on the one hand, which would mean our delay at Bailundu until the chiefs return from war, December or January; or, on the other hand, to divide, leaving some with the sick, and the well to go on and see to houses and shelter, was the question. The sick ones were unwilling to be left; the carriers were unwilling to go without me.

Again, a fair company of Civandu men had offered themselves for the coast, if some one would leave to go down with them. So now we have the prospect of being divided a bit. Dr. W. Fisher and A. Munnoch go to the coast. Mr. Thomson, Mr. Lane, Miss Gilchrist, Mrs. Arnot, and myself, hope to go on to Bihe, while Mr. and Mrs. Morris move nearer to our American friends, with Mr. Gall and Miss Davis. Dr. George Fisher, we hope, will remain with them.

The convalescence of Mr. Morris seems to have made this latter arrangement possible. Perhaps it has been wisely ordered that we should approach Bihe in a smaller company; it would, of course, make preliminary arrangements with chiefs, &c., all the more easy. The simple sort of bilious fever that nearly all have taken at some time or other, has chiefly been owing to undue exposure to the sun. That it is of a very simple order shows itself in the fact that nearly all recover from it, better than they were before, and more inured to the climate.

In cases of malarial fever, it is not so; awkward and dangerous sequels follow, and the patient is more exposed than ever to repeated attacks. While writing this letter, I am sitting up with Mr. Morris, as he is feeling his weakness now, and is very restless; but there is no high temperature or fever-pulse left.

October 18.—Morris' state is still critical, and Gall is very ill. We wait on God. Whether we shall get away from here or not is still uncertain. All the rest are well. Love to all. We are feeling the blessedness of waiting on the Lord, knowing that it is no vain thing to do so. I would gladly write more, but have never a moment to call my own.—Yours in Christ,

F. S. ARNOT.

## A SAD P. S.

BONGE, BEYOND CILUME,  
23rd October.

Messrs. Thomson and Lane, Miss Gilchrist, Mrs. Arnot, and myself (five in all), are on our way to Bihe; Dr. Walter Fisher and A. Munnoch are going down to the coast with carriers. Dr. George Fisher, Mrs. Morris, and Miss Davis, remain at Cilume, and will shortly return to England. Mr. Morris and Mr. Gall are dead. I have written to Dr. McLean a full account, so do not repeat in any other letter. All are well, and longing to push on. In four days we expect to be in Bihe.

The Lord enable us to learn His lesson, and so to walk before Him; and may He, in His own time, heal our sorrow and send us help in this trouble. I cannot write more. I have scarce had time to eat, these last few weeks.—Yours affectionately,

F. S. A.

## ANOTHER LETTER.

LONDON, December 19, 1889.

THIS news comes like a thunderclap on all that hear it. It seems that nearly all the party had fever, more or less severely, at Utilama, where they camped for almost three weeks, especially Misses Gilchrist and Davis. Dear Brother T. H. Morris was ill for about a fortnight, and varied a great deal in that time; nearly always when awake he was delirious, and in his delirium preached the Gospel from John iii. 16. He passed away on Saturday, 19th October, 1889, at 9 p.m., being unconscious at the time. Dear Brother R. B. Gall was only seriously ill about a week, and passed away at 2 a.m. on the morning of the 20th, five hours after dear Morris. Both were 36 years of age. From the letters we find that Mrs. Morris, Miss Davis, and Dr. George Fisher (late of Swansea), were leaving for the coast, *en route* for home, and a telegram was received from Benguella yesterday to say they were leaving there to-day. Walter Fisher and A. Munnoch were also leaving for the coast with about 150 carriers to bring up the remaining loads. The rest of the party, consisting of F. S. and Mrs. Arnot, H. B. Thompson, Fred Lane, and Miss Gilchrist, were journeying towards Bihe, which they hoped to reach in three or four days. All were in good health. D. Crawford does not appear to be mentioned in the letters; he was probably at Bihe, or had possibly pushed on further towards the Garenganze, to the relief of Swan and Faulknor. Utilama is the name of the place where the two dear brethren passed away and were buried, about 17 miles from the Americans' station at Cilume. Both died of fever, and Mr. Arnot has no doubt that the germs of it were brought from the coast.

J. L.

[It is with unfeigned sorrow we publish the above copy of letter just received from Mr. Arnot. In the presence of what, in the light of nature and of reason, we should call such a "disaster," it becomes us reverently to bow and worship.

"Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

What His purpose may be we know not; in waiting upon God it may become clearer to us. Meantime our fervent prayers and sympathies are called for on behalf of the widow and fatherless children of our beloved brother Morris, and others who loved him well and who mourn the loss, though not "as those who have no hope." Also on behalf of relatives and friends of our brother Gall, and on behalf of the now reduced and divided band of resolute ambassadors for Christ, who are endeavouring to make their way to the heart of Africa. May the Lord Himself comfort them and minister fresh grace adequate to their need.

Surely they are now more heavily than ever laid upon our hearts before God.—[J. R. C.]



## PAUL'S CHEERING EXHORTATION.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE  
TO THE CORINTHIANS, BY J. R. C.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”  
(I Cor. xv. 58).

**T**HOUGH errors of doctrine and practice had crept into the church at Corinth; though there was much with which the apostle had to find fault; nevertheless, with sincerity of heart, he addresses them in terms of endearment, “My beloved brethren.”

It is quite a mistake to suppose that faithfulness is not in keeping with love. It is little use our attempting to censure and rebuke if we have not first given those with whom we are dealing the assurance that we love them.

The spirit of the apostle in all his dealings with his brethren is very beautiful; love and tears are mingled with his sternest rebukes; and always does he seek to own every good thing in them before he touches their failures.

Alas! how little of this spirit is to be found now in that which is supposed to be faithful ministry! Less faithfulness is not what is wanted; we would not contend for the least abatement in the pointed appeal to heart and conscience, or the laying bare of error, sin, and failure; but we do contend for tenderness and grace in the spirit, language, and tones of those who minister reproof.

“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable,” &c. Why does the apostle wind up this magnificent chapter on the resurrection in this manner? Evidently he had counted the cost; he knew that “the work of the Lord” would bring him reproach and loss—suffering and death here; but none of these things moved him, for his hope of recompense was in resurrection.

And so he exhorts the saints to go on “steadfast” in purpose of heart, and “unmoveable” in their adherence to the truth, knowing that whatever it might cost them the glorious end in resurrection at the coming of the Lord would abundantly justify their decision.

If we have not counted the cost, then we cannot be steadfast and unmoveable. Each fresh difficulty and disappointment will discourage us. We are not called to the work of the Lord for a few months, or years; but to go in for it, and to go on with it till the Lord comes. God means us to be done with the pleasures of sin and of worldliness for ever, and with everything that would hinder whole-hearted devotedness to His service; and, with our eye on the resurrection morning, to go on through evil report and good report till the Master calls us hence.

I can look back upon young men by the dozen who were once apparently as hearty in the work of the Lord as any of us, but who, having become entangled with the world, grew cold and formal first; and then, like Demas, forsook the Lord, His people, and His work, having loved this present world.

Consider that glorious One who counted the cost of redeeming us to Himself. He knew that He must go down beneath the billows and waves of the judgment due to us, and yet, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured it all. What a recompense is His! The right hand of the throne, the fulness of joy, the pleasures for evermore!

And in measure as He was tested and tried, so will we be. Tremendous power will be brought to bear upon us, to force us, if it were possible, to surrender our place of service and testimony.

See that lighthouse, far out upon a rocky islet; why is it so securely built? Why such expense and labour to make it as firm as the rock upon which it is founded? Because all the force of the ocean's raging billows will burst upon it, and that just at the time when it is most needed. And even such are the powers that will assail the believer; but the glorious truth of the resurrection is given as an anchor for our souls, both sure and steadfast. As the vessel moored outrides the gale with its stern to the storm, so we, with our eye on that blessed hope, will be kept from drifting, knowing that our reward is sure.

But the recompense is not altogether future. Godliness has the promise of “the life that now is,” as well as of “that which is to

come." Not of "the world that now is," but of "the life." Whether would you have been Paul and Silas, with their bleeding backs and their feet in the stocks, singing for gladness of heart, or the magistrates that come to set them free? One would say that, with all their sufferings, Paul and Silas were the happiest. There is a joy and gladness in the service of the Lord now that no other life affords; and its joys are pure: they leave no sting behind, no bitter regrets.

"Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Notice, it does not say "in work for the Lord." Much is done that is said to be for the Lord, which is not really His work at all.

In 1 Thess. i. 3, we read of "*work of faith*," "*labour of love*," and "*patience of hope*." Again, in Rev. ii. 2, we read of their "work and labour and patience." The same three words occur in both, but in Revelation there is no mention of the "faith," the "love," or the "hope." Outward activities may be largely engaged in, and much that passes for genuine service, but what is work to Christ if it be not "work of faith"? What is labour, if it be not "labour of love"? What is patience, if it be not a patience that counts upon His coming as its goal?

It is the faith, the love, and the hope, that are precious in the eyes of the Lord.

It is a great mistake to limit "the work of the Lord" to Gospel work. The work of the Lord for each one is that particular line of service to which He has called them, and for which He has qualified them.

Take for example Col. iii. 22, to servants, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." Thus, those who are in the position of bond-servants have the joy of knowing that in all they do they may be acceptably serving the Lord, and may count upon reward at His appearing. Thus, the most ignoble work is sanctified and made honourable.

Observe also in 1 Tim. v. 10, a little *resumé* of women's work, "If she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have

relieved the afflicted"—in any and all of these a believing woman can find what is for her "the work of the Lord."

Whatever sphere we are placed in, we each have a work to do for Him, and in it to please Him and to honour Him.

Therefore, important as preaching the Gospel is, let us not suppose that "the work of the Lord" is summed up in that. It is one department of His work, and willingly would we accord to it the very first place, the place that God assigns to it.

But the pastor and the teacher, the mother and the bond-servant, each have their own sphere and service, and therein is "the work of the Lord" for them.

"Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." It may appear to be in vain, there may be little manifest fruit; but in the Lord to whom it is done, it is not, it cannot be in vain.

I do not say that we should be satisfied to see no results from Gospel testimony; it is right that we should expect fruit. But even if no fruit is manifest, do not allow that as a pretext for giving it up or losing heart; there may be results that we do not see, and which it would not be good for us to see.

I know of a Gospel meeting that was carried on for a considerable time, and no fruit was apparent. But within some years thereafter, it was found that no less than fifty conversions had resulted from that apparently fruitless effort.

There have been efforts made in tents and otherwise, in Glasgow, which have at the time appeared to be without fruit; but in every case fruit has afterwards been found.

Therefore, do not be discouraged. Go on steadfast, unmoveable, in the work. Take up the Cross. Accept the reproach. Be patient, though you receive little help and little sympathy from those from whom you expected much. Though misunderstood and evil spoken of, still go on, and whatever the Lord gives you to do, do it with your might, and be assured your labour is not in vain in the Lord. The resurrection morning will prove the truth of this word, when nothing that was truly done to the Lord will be passed unnoticed.

## THE SPIRIT OF LIFE;

A Sixfold View of the Dealings of the Holy Spirit with Believers.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

[SECOND PAPER.]

### III. His Preservative Work.

THAT is the sealing of the believer as the special property of the Lord God. As the Spirit is not the baptiser, so Christ, and the Spirit is the element, so the Spirit is not the sealer but the seal, God through Christ being the Sealer. Controversy, often fierce and fleshly, has raged around this subject of the sealing of the Spirit. But may we, beloved, ever have a holy shrinking from taking one step into the unhallowed region of fleshly argument over spiritual, eternal things.

What saith the Scripture on this subject? To be brief, there are at least seven things taught in the Word about it, which are of the greatest importance for us to know and hold with the firm grasp of faith. We can do no more than epitomise them, praying the Holy Spirit to unfold and apply them to each believer.

Who is the Sealer? We have more than hinted that God the Father is the Sealer. He sanctified and sent His Son into the world to be the Sin Atoner and Redeemer of His own; and in the world He sealed Him as His Son. "Him hath God the Father sealed" (John x. 26). He that sealed His only begotten Son seals His sons: those who are such through faith in the Sealed One. This the apostle clearly enunciates in the following passage:—"He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). It is a truism that all the operations of the Father are through the Son. So therefore is the sealing.

What is the Seal? Is it an effect; an experience? No! it is the Holy Spirit Himself. Not in His offices, effects, or acts, but Himself abiding in the saint, as an inhabitant in the house. "Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). Thus He who is the baptismal element is also the Seal.

"Seal of immortality,  
Comforter Divine."

Let there be a child-like reception of this truth, and confusion of thought and consequent perplexity of mind will be avoided.

Who are the Sealed Ones? None but sons are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Those who are as yet in their Adam state and relationship cannot be sealed. The seal of God does not rest upon death but upon life. The Holy Dove can find no rest where death reigns; only where there is life. This sealing includes all who are sons, without one exception; and it excludes all who are not sons by regeneration. All inside the family circle of the Divine Father are sealed for eternity; and upon none outside that circle has the seal been placed.

When does the sealing take place? Of this we are left in no uncertainty whatever; the Word of the Lord is clear, and emphatic as to the time of this sealing; it is on believing the Gospel. "Having heard the word of the truth—the gospel of your salvation—in whom having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13. R.V.)

Can language be clearer than that? Can truth be stated more explicitly? Can any but a prejudiced mind reject the statement that sealing is simultaneous with believing the emancipating gospel of the blessed God?

The moment there is a definite reception of the truth of Christ by the believing sinner, that moment there is a direct sealing of the person by the Living God in the Holy Spirit. Beloved, be clear as to this, that sealing does not take place at some indefinite period after, but upon and in believing.

Is this sealing appropriative? Yes! on the Divine side sealing is appropriative: it is God sealing His property with His own seal and in effect saying to the sealed one, "Thou art Mine." As no man knoweth the Son but the Father, so no one knoweth the sons but the Father; but they are all known of Him. "Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are His." The practical outcome of which is to "depart from iniquity."

Is it to the believer an assurance of sonship? Yes! Just as circumcision was to Abraham a seal of the righteousness of faith (Rom. iv. 11), even so the witness of the sealing Spirit to the Christian is a pledge and an assurance of

sonship (Rom. viii. 14-18). And thus do we see that sealing coalesces with the witness of the Spirit: they go together, though the former gives birth to the latter. In order of time the sealing precedes the witness.

What is the ultimate object of the sealing? It is for preservation to resurrection glory at the appearing of the Coming One. It is a preservative against all the danger the saint is exposed, to from sin's presence, world-power, and Satan's continued assaults upon his life, faith, and testimony "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30). Sealed for Redemption Day! Is not this full of abundant comfort, that the seal cannot be broken, and in consequence the child of God cannot become a prey to his enemies?

How assuring to thee, beloved fellow-believer, that notwithstanding thou art surrounded by weakness—in the midst of conflict, the subject of fierce temptation—and often a partaker of sorrow, that thou art sealed with the seal of the Living God for Redemption Day: a day which will bring to thee such gladness and glory as thou hast never dreamt of.

This sealing is, in one word, the work of the Spirit of Life in preserving life for the Day of Resurrection life and glory.

As baptism is the work of the Spirit in forming the one body, so sealing is in one sense His work of preserving it. The Former and the Preserver being one.

The next aspect, in moral order, of the work of the Spirit of Life is:—

#### IV. His Instructive Work.

Few indeed are the things predicated of our Lord Jesus, from His birth till His ascension to the Father's right hand, that are not also predicated of those who are in Him. Take as an example the striking parallelism which exists between Christ and the *Christed*, with reference to the work of the Spirit of Life. He was conceived and born of Him, and so also are all those—spiritually—who are begotten of God. The Spirit dwelt in Him as an inhabitant. Seven hundred and fifty years before He became flesh, it was said:—"The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him." Not

visit Him for a brief season merely and then depart as in the case of some of the Old Testament saints. "For upon whom thou shalt see (said the Lord God to John the Baptist) the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Spirit" (John i. 33). The same Holy One abides in the believer according to His promise, therefore His body is the temple of God. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in you."

He was baptised with the Holy Spirit, and thus invested with the Messianic office and at the same time constituted the Baptist of His own. Believers at the time they receive the washing of regeneration are, as we have already seen, baptised into the one mystical body, by a baptism which is never repeated.

Again, the Lord Jesus was *full* of the Spirit—always full. "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure," and hence we read:—"Jesus being *full* of the Holy Spirit" (Luke iv. 1). The ideal—the normal condition of the child of God is likewise to be full of the Spirit. If it could with truth be said under the covenant of works, "I am full of the Spirit of Jehovah" (Mic. iii. 18), ought it not to be so said with greater emphasis under the covenant of grace?

He was led of the Spirit, not only on isolated occasions but always, and hence He could say:—"I do always those things that please." His being led by the Spirit into the wilderness was simply an example of the whole unbroken tenor of His life on earth.

O beloved, the only possible way to prove our sonship is in yielding ourselves to be led of the Spirit. A Spirit-led life will be intensely spiritual. Such a life can neither be legal nor fleshly.

We must pause with the next parallel, not that the list is exhausted, but because sufficient has been advanced to encourage the willing-hearted to go further afield into this region of heart-refreshing, and faith-strengthening truth, illustrative of the true believer's oneness with Christ. He was anointed with the Spirit according to the prophetic word (Isa. lxii. 1, Luke iv. 18), and also all who are in Him have likewise been anointed with the same anointing.

In order to fully understand what is meant by this it will be necessary to trace the analogy which exists between His anointing and theirs.

In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus said:—"The Spirit of Jehovah is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me." "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee."

Here the analogy is complete, for He, the Anointer of the Son of His love, anoints His sons. "He which hath anointed us is God." Prospectively viewed the Lord's people were ever anointed in Him, but as a matter of fact only when they received Him.

Again, He was anointed for service. "Thy holy servant Jesus whom thou didst anoint" (Acts iv. 27. R.V.); and in the indument of that anointing He went about doing good. Need we say, that true, hearty, loyal service must be in the power of this anointing, and unless it is so, the service will, of necessity, be legal, perfunctory, and irksome, and in consequence will be fruitless instead of fruitful.

Another effect of this is joy—joyfulness. He was anointed with "oil of gladness above His fellows."

This oil of gladness has been put upon His people, and hence they have received beauty in place of ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness (Isa. lxi. 3). This joy is the heritage of all who fear His name, for the Kingdom of God which is within them is joy in the Holy Spirit. Need we remark that when the Spirit is quenched or grieved, the joy for the time being is forfeited, and can only be restored when full, hearty confession has been made of the cause, or causes, which led to its suspension.

One more result of this phase of the Spirit's work upon living ones, and that perhaps the principal one—a result as wide as the Church of God—is the capability to understand the Divine will through the written word according to the measure of the capacity of the individual saint. The anointing of the Lord made Him of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah. Similarly, believers are according to the measure of their gift enabled to know the will of the Lord. "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man

teach you: but this anointing teacheth you all things" (1 John ii. 20-27).

This is an absolute necessity in order to know in any measure the word and will of the Lord. For the merely natural man cannot understand spiritual things. Of this we have an abundance of remarkable illustrations in the gospel by John alone. For instance: The Lord speaking of the temple of His body, the flesh in which the Word tabernacled, the Jews thought He was speaking of the temple on Moriah. When He taught of a birth from above one of their teachers understood Him to speak of a merely natural birth.

Again, when discoursing to the woman of Sychar of the water of life—the living water—she imagined, not being spiritual, He referred to the water in the well sunk by Jacob. When speaking of Himself as the Bread of Life—the living bread—the listeners being merely natural men, said:—"How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

One more solemn illustration of this truth—that man by his unaided intellect cannot receive Divine things, and that only by the Spirit of God can he know the things of God—and I have done.

When Jesus said:—"I go My way," the hearers of the darkened mind said:—"Will He kill Himself?" They thought He meditated self-destruction. Human nature—the natural mind, is the same in all ages, and needs the illumination of the Spirit to perceive things which are spiritual and divine (1 Cor. ii.) To be able in any measure to really know the mind of the Lord through the Word is the work of the Spirit. He alone can bridge the chasm which exists between the natural understanding and spiritual things. This is His instructive work.

Living ones alone are in the school of God, where the instructor is the Holy Spirit, and the book the everlasting incorruptible Word.

We can only be effectually learning as we abide in Christ, and hence the apostle's imperative words, "Abide ye in Him" (1 John ii. 27. R.V.). Out of communion we cannot learn, neither can we do the things we have learned. Beloved make use of your anointing; in other words, let the Holy Spirit instruct you in the Word of Truth.

(To be continued.)

## "GOD OVER ALL."

As seen in the closing scene of Christ's life.

JOHN xix.

[SECOND PAPER.]

TO continue. When Pilate heard the answer returned by our Lord to his haughty assumption of power to crucify, or to release, his mental distress increased, and "*from henceforth he sought to release Him.*"

He was arrested by the quiet dignity of that Blessed One. Among all the criminals that had ever been brought before him, he never had seen the like of this One. There was something about His whole appearance and bearing that struck awe and admiration into the heart of this wicked tyrant.

Moreover, his wife had sent to him, as soon as he had sat down on the judgment-seat, saying—"Have thou nothing to do with *that just Man*"; so that he was the more afraid.

He set about doing his utmost to liberate Him up to the point of endangering his own interests. "But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." Intimidating words! And how came it that these Jews spake thus of a Roman emperor? Alas! they had rejected GOD as their King; and GOD, as a punishment, had left them without any king of their own. Hence, they were at this time tributary to Rome. Yet they knew not their thralldom; they owned not their true King. All they wanted in their blindness and infatuation was to have JESUS hastily put to death! Pilate delivered Him to their will! And, in an incredibly short space of time, that Blessed One might have been seen going forth patiently bearing His cross. The fact of the Saviour bearing His cross is deserving of particular notice, in its connection with the incident mentioned in another gospel, of their compelling a stranger, coming out of the country, to bear it for Him (Luke xxiii. 23-27). Our LORD began the rapid journey to Calvary bearing the cross on which He was to suffer. But all was urged on with such amazing hurry that His advance under the heavy burden, all bruised and lacerated as He was, was not sufficiently speedy to satisfy the murderous

haste of those bloodthirsty Jews. Indeed, when we consider what a large city Jerusalem was, and with what impetuous and satanic zeal the LORD was hurried from place to place—twice to the court of Pilate; once to Herod's palace; and finally, after mock trials, as a condemned criminal to Calvary—we can easily conceive how suffering and worn He must have been physically; to say nothing of His far deeper agony as the Sin-bearer.

The cross was taken off, as it seems to me—comparing scripture with scripture—not from compassion for the meek and lowly One who bore it, but to hasten on the dreadful deed, to nail Him to it the sooner, lest haply, by any means, He might escape from their hands.

Pictures have represented the cross on which our Lord suffered as far less rough than those to which the malefactors, crucified with Him, were nailed. But, undoubtedly, there was no such distinction between them; that Sinless One having been put to death as a base, vile malefactor, not worthy to live. The smooth, ornamental crosses of painters and image-makers are but creations of the fancy, and libels of the truth. The cross on which the Redeemer suffered was but a rough, unsightly instrument of torture, rudely and hastily constructed by those who knew nothing of the dignity of the One who was to hang thereon. It is important to note this, especially in days when the sacred symbol of the cross is worn as an ornament. None but the vilest criminals, usually only slaves, were subjected to crucifixion. But "the LORD of Glory," "the Holy One of God," was treated as the vilest of the vile, because "made a curse for us." Not a particle of distinction was observed between this Blessed One, the Maker of the universe, and the vilest of the vile. Oh! how our hearts should swell with adoring gratitude as we, severally, say to ourselves in amazement, "And all this He bore *for me!*"

Next we must notice the inscription over the cross. How plainly is "the finger of God" to be seen in it! (John xix. 19).

It was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin—the languages most commonly understood and spoken by the multitudes then assembled in and around Jerusalem.

It plainly asserted the very fact so

clamorously denied by the Jews; and they were urgent in their entreaties to have it altered. But this time they did not gain their point. Pilate was determined to show himself the great man, the governor, the one whose word was law; and the proud man answered, summarily, "*What I have written, I have written.*"

Now it is certain that, had he believed in the LORD JESUS as the promised King of the Jews—the sent One of God, or Messiah—he would never have consented to His death. So that his written testimony to the truth he denied virtually, was evidently the overruling hand of Him who makes even the wrath of man to praise Him.

That this crucified Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the CHRIST OF GOD, the anointed King of kings, will yet be manifested. For this crucified, and risen, and ascended One, *is coming again*—it may be *soon*—to "take unto Him His great power, and reign" over the house of David, and all the kingdoms of the world.

What Pilate had written could not be altered, because, under the overruling power of God, he had written what was *true*, what harmonised with the Scriptures of Truth.

How precious such an incident as this to the hearts of God's children!

So also as regards the coat, or outer garment, worn by our adorable LORD. When you look at the prophecy relating to each minute detail, so many years before, and trace with what marvellous accuracy each item was fulfilled in the providence of God, when "the set time had come,"—every comparatively little thing, each trifle, as men speak, having its own place—those brutal soldiers, not liking to rend the garment, yet none willing to yield his claim for it, had recourse to the drawing of lots to see who it should be. And this—because it "*was written*" that so it should be (Ps. xxii. 18). Ah! when you think of these hard-hearted men, who but a little while previously had been mocking the crucified Saviour, yet, without knowing it, constrained by Divine power to fulfil every little word of the inspired prediction, how it should strengthen your faith in the Word of God! How it should assure your hearts that though heaven and earth should pass away, yet shall

not that Word pass away but be fully, accomplished in its minutest particulars.

And so, in like manner, do the very infidels of our own day—while asking, in bitter irony, "Where is the promise of His coming?"—fulfil the very Scriptures they labour to destroy.

Yea, the very tongue of the scoffer, in these last and perilous days, *must* serve to accomplish God's word.

So that, let men use their tongues, their hands, their feet, or not, for the glory of God, all *must* subserve His glory, as this little incident under the cross may serve to remind us. What cared those cruel soldiers about the word and will of God? Yet are they made the unconscious instruments of fulfilling both (John xix. 23, 24). Oh! there is something exceedingly comforting and refreshing to the heart of the child of God in all this! What stability it imparts to the Word of God, amid the instability of all else on earth!

"*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother,*" &c. (Matt. xix. 25-27).

This too—how refreshing to the spirit!

We read nothing of one or another of His disciples being there, except John.

But the love of the mother's heart drew her thither, though a sword was to pierce through it; and the loving gratitude of the other women who had experienced such blessing from the One who hung there, was as a magnet which they could not resist.

There they stood, patient and sorrowing, not to be driven thence by the rude scoffs of the ruffians around; for their *love* was such as many waters could not quench, nor could the floods drown it.

And the LORD JESUS knew this, and appreciated it; and reciprocated it a thousand-fold. In the midst of His agonising sufferings, that blessed head was turned with a look of infinite tenderness and compassion upon her who was His mother after the flesh; and, glancing next upon the disciple whom He loved, He said to *her*, "Behold thy son!"—to *him*, "Behold thy mother!" and, in the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel narrative, it is related, that "from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

Oh! what comfort have we here for mourning and bereaved ones!

The loving heart of the dying LORD JESUS

took in all the circumstance of Mary's desolation, and made provision for all.

True, He did not expatiate in words upon her changed position; or command John to be to her, as far as might be, all that HE had been. There was no need for this. That disciple was so in fellowship with, and had so much of the mind of Christ, a glance, the faintest hint, was enough to reveal all to him. He knew the will of his Master without it being plainly and authoritatively told to him. There was no pathetic description of Mary's altered lot; no saying, "She will no longer have the love, and care, and sympathy to which she has been accustomed. Go, and do as I have done." No! it was quite enough for him to hear, "Behold thy son!"—he understood all the rest; he felt it all; and, as being in fellowship with his Divine Master, it was in his heart and thoughts to fulfil all, so that no particular directions were needed, or given.

So should it be with us, beloved in Christ.

So should we ever be in fellowship with our LORD and Master as that a look at Him, and from Him—a very gentle hint—a very little thing should be enough to reveal His mind to us, and to set us upon doing His will.

Oh! for more of this fellowship with the FATHER, and with HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, through the SPIRIT!

Oh! for more of the "mind that was also in CHRIST JESUS!"

This is what is required, beloved brethren, to set us upon fulfilling His word and will, without any need for "I command thee!"

Let us seek so to walk in fellowship with Him as that the very gentlest indication shall suffice at once to show us His will concerning us, and to make us loving doers of it, to His glory. Let us be as intent on fulfilling the Word of God in all our words and ways as HE was, who "left us an example that we should follow His steps."

\* \* \* \* \*

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, *that the scripture might be fulfilled*, saith, I thirst" (verse 28).

Here is a point we should particularly notice—our Lord's reason for saying "I thirst": "*that the scripture might be fulfilled.*" This is deeply important. Oh! what respect

that Blessed One ever had to the WRITTEN WORD OF GOD! What Divine Authority He attached to it! We, His brethren, should seek to resemble Him in this also; and let nothing share our reverence for the Scriptures of Truth, to which He ever yielded such perfect obedience.

In these days of infidelity it is particularly desirable that we should keep steadily before us His example in this respect, and that of His first disciples.

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, *It is finished*: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

"*It is finished!*" Oh! blessed, precious words! all the work He had undertaken to do—now done. How full of comfort to our souls, this assurance!

That Blessed One could look up to His Father and say, with infinite satisfaction, "I have *finished* the work which Thou gavest Me to do." And we now partake in that finished work, and in all that resulted from it; all that He did and suffered on our behalf, "that He might bring us to God."

And let us not forget it was the love of the Father that sent Him, no less than it was His who gave Himself for us, to which we owe this great salvation, and the glorious prospects before us when the crucified and risen One shall return in glory.

He has been to us the Revealer of the Father's heart. His life and death on earth have abundantly manifested that "GOD IS LOVE." Truly may we sing:

"We give Thee thanks unfeign'd,  
Lord Jesus, Friend in need!  
For what Thy soul sustain'd,  
When Thou for us didst bleed;  
Grant us to lean, unshaken,  
Upon Thy faithfulness;  
Until to glory taken  
We see Thee face to face."

G. M.

TRIBULATION cannot separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But the love of God will, in the end, separate you from tribulation, and bring you out of it and give you fulness of joy.

MARTIN LUTHER'S motto was, "*Vivit Christus*"—Christ liveth! Paul's is yet a more blessed motto, "Christ liveth *in me!*"



## HOME IS DRAWING NEARER.

ANOTHER year is past and gone,  
Home is drawing nearer ;  
One less o'er this wild waste to roam,  
Christ becometh dearer.

As we the year that's past retrace,  
Home is drawing nearer ;  
Our God's abiding faithfulness,  
Christ becometh dearer.

Our Ebenezer we would raise,  
Home is drawing nearer ;  
For changeless love, abounding grace,  
Christ becometh dearer.

Though waters deep and dark we cross,  
Home is drawing nearer ;  
Our little barque holds on its course,  
Christ becometh dearer.

What though 'gainst adverse wind and tide,  
Home is drawing nearer ;  
Salvation's Captain's on our side,  
Christ becometh dearer.

Let ocean lash itself to foam,  
Home is drawing nearer ;  
We soon shall see the lights of home,  
Christ becometh dearer.

Should darkness deepen into night,  
Home is drawing nearer ;  
While watching for the morning light,  
Christ becometh dearer.

D. M'I.

## THE GLORY OF GOD'S SALVATION.

"And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee"  
(Luke v. 20).

WE hear very often about great facts and great questions; for instance, intemperance is a great fact in this country, and remedial measures for this and other evils are the great questions of the day. Without intending to minimise these evils, or the importance of abating them, we cannot come to the Word of God in simplicity of spirit without being struck by this: How soon we who are Christians may

drift from our scriptural moorings, if I may use the expression, in reference to the estimate formed of the *proportionate* importance of facts and questions. You know that the mariner's compass on board modern vessels is often thrown out by the mass of iron closely adjoining it, and our environments are too often apt to prejudice and warp our spiritual judgment as to the comparative importance of things, and we need to come back again and again to God's written Word, that the compass of our soul, so to speak, may be readjusted.

Now, I think this verse is very important in its bearing on this matter, because it puts before us in a very forcible light *the* fact, which of all others is the most important; and *the* question, which is the most momentous question for every son of Adam. This verse teaches us that *the* great fact for man in the sight of God is *sin*; that however important other facts may be, this utterly dwarfs every other; *sin*, the existence of sin; and the most pressing, urgent, and momentous *question* for every sinner is: How may I obtain and know that I have the *forgiveness* of sins?

I take it that the order in which the Lord Jesus dispenses blessing to this poor needy one just teaches us that. This poor man was laid at His feet, helpless and palsied, shaking from head to foot; *that* was the great fact to merely *human* sympathy. But how did the *Lord Jesus* deal with the man? He appeared to take no notice whatever of his physical condition. For the moment He passed by *that*, and, as the Living Word entered inside the man and recognised the *moral* disease, which was the cause of the physical disorder, and does what God alone can do, deals with the *conscience* of the man—"Man, thy sins are forgiven thee."

May the Holy Spirit of God write this deeply on the hearts of any who are allowing that all-important fact and most pressing question, viz., *sin*, and how sin can be forgiven,—wait till others of lesser importance have been attended to. The great fact is, that you are a sinner, and the burning question between your soul and God, How can I obtain forgiveness of sin?

I ask you to consider, *First*, that here we see the Lord Jesus absolving sin *in His own*

*Name, and on His own authority*; and how much is involved in that! What does that, apart from everything else, tell us about His Person? Simply that He is *God!* The Pharisees felt that, "Who can forgive sins but *God* alone?" Yes, it was nothing less than a claim to *Divine* authority, when, in His own Name, and on His own authority, that Blessed One said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Contrast with this the action of His disciples, to whom He said in John xx., "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins you retain, they are retained." Now, what does that mean? They are wonderful words, and I suppose the apostles to whom they were spoken were the most likely to understand what they meant; and therefore, if we carefully watch how they acted in pursuance of that commission, and on that authority, shall we not best get at the meaning of the words? Peter, speaking to the Jews, says, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38). "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (iii. 19). "Neither is there salvation in any other," &c. (iv. 10-12). In his testimony to the *Jews*, Peter thus preached remission of sins through faith in a crucified and risen Christ. Again, in chapter x., we find this one to whom was given the key to open the door of faith to the Jews, putting the key in the wards of the other lock, and opening the door of faith to the *Gentiles*, saying, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (verse 43). The testimony of two men is true, so let us now take the apostle of the *Gentiles* (Acts xiii. 38, 39): "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Thus, the apostles *remitted sins*: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them"; and they remitted sins by testifying of the remission of sins, on the ground of the acceptance of

a crucified and risen Christ. How did they "retain" sins? See Acts xiii. 46: "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the *Gentiles*"; that is the way in which they retained sins; they declared on God's behalf that guilty sinners before whom the way of life was set, and who deliberately rejected it, were left to die in their sins. I have never found (and I don't think you would be able to) any portion in the New Testament which gives any evidence of any other way in which the apostles remitted and retained sin; and there is not a single instance in the New Testament of any apostle in his own name, or on his own authority, remitting or retaining sin; but they all bear testimony to the full, free, and everlasting remission of sins immediately on the acceptance of Christ, and they held forth no "larger hope," but *shut* the door of the kingdom of God against all deliberate rejectors of Christ.

Now, in contrast with the mode of these faithful witnesses, the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, we find the Blessed One who was Himself the fountain of life, in His own Name, and on His own authority, absolving sin. What follows from that? We bow in heart before the Lord Jesus, and do what the disciples did after His resurrection, "worship Him."

Beloved fellow-sinners, longing for salvation, I would not put the thickness of a sheet of tissue paper between you and Christ. Let *pretended* "successors" of the apostles stand between the sinner and the Saviour. The one business of the true servant of God is to bring the sinner face to face with the Saviour; and I declare out of a full heart, "To *you* is the word of this salvation sent." "Look unto *Him*, and be ye saved"; look to Him who died, and rose again, and is now on the right hand of God; look to Him as the appointed surety, trust in what He did and suffered, and you shall be saved. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." It is contact—personal, individual contact with the Saviour—that saves.

*Secondly*, Notice another thing in this verse; the Lord Jesus not only absolved in His own name, and on His own authority, but on the ground of the atoning work that He was about to complete. The law in Lev. xvii. is: "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"; and the Holy Spirit, in Heb. ix., comments upon this immutable law thus: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Now, what did the Lord Jesus say of Himself? "Think not that I am come to destroy the law; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Would He, who testifies thus of Himself, by any arbitrary act of mercy, abrogate God's law? Impossible. Not by any act of grace that is not in righteousness; not in mere pity, but on the righteous ground of sin being atoned for by the shedding of blood; on the righteous ground of life, resigned in the sinner's stead, God alone could forgive. Now, He who came to fulfil the law, could not possibly abrogate it; so He forgave on account of His atoning work. "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." On what ground? On the ground of the precious blood He was presently going to pour out for the remission of sins. According to His own words: "My blood shed for many for the remission of sins." Abel, and all the saved, before Christ's coming, were looking forward to the perfect work which should be accomplished on the Cross; and the types and shadows brought comfort to the true believer, to the Spirit-taught one, only as through them he looked to the One to come. "It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"; yet, offered by the Spirit-taught offerer, they pointed to the One to come, of whom it is written: "How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works." Oh! beloved friends and fellow-sinners, longing to know your sins are forgiven, this is the righteous ground on which God can forgive sin: His own Son has borne the penalty in your stead, satisfied the requirements of God's law, and on that ground the righteous God can righteously pardon; and all who do believe, trust in, rest upon that blessed Saviour, have the forgiveness of sins.

J. W.

(To be continued.)

## TO GOD'S SORROWING AND AFFLICTED.

**B**ELIEVERS are more dear to God than mind can fathom. We are compared to the most precious and costly materials—silver, gold, and pearls. We are predestinated according to the eternal purpose of God, to be conformed to the image of His Son in glory (Rom. viii. 29)—a blessed purpose which no power can possibly frustrate. But the furnace in the meantime is needed to purify and purge from dross and grit the precious metals. The breaking and bruising is a painful process, but it cannot be dispensed with, if the Divine Refiner would see in every bit of gold the reflection of His own image (Mal. iii. 3).

He sits at the mouth of the furnace while Christ Himself, absolutely pure and as absolutely sympathetic, takes a place in company with the sufferer in it (Dan. iii. 25). Wisdom, Divine wisdom, superintends every detail. There will not be a blow of the hammer too many or one too severe; nor will the furnace be heated one degree beyond what is absolutely necessary. The duration and intensity of the fires of affliction are limited and controlled. God measures our difficulties and fills our cups. All, all is under a Father's hand, and He "will never cause His child a needless tear."

Would we seek to escape the present and painful discipline of the Lord, as we reflect on the distinguished place we are each to occupy—a discipline, moreover, which is only for a season, and for which there is a needs be (1 Peter i. 6)? "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. xxx. 5). The Valley of Baca (Ps. lxxxiv. 6), wet with the tears, and its silence broken by the sobs of the Lord's redeemed, leads on to the rest and worship of the House of the Lord (verse 4). Tribulation is God's appointed path for all His sons and daughters; but it ends in the kingdom and fulness of joy. Besides all, there are present lessons as well as a grand future. We are yet in the school of God and of sorrow. Our richest lessons were taught us in the shade, which we never could have learnt in the sunshine.

"My times are in Thy hand" (Ps. xxxi. 15).

Is it a safe hand? An Almighty hand? An infinitely tender hand? Ah! yes. The hand that holds you up is one of Divine love and of omnipotent strength. Our times, whether dark or bright, whether of sorrow, desolation, poverty, and death, are in Jehovah's hand; and that is enough, methinks, for weakness to lean upon. Our life seems a tangled web. Who can unravel its mysteries, or explain its apparent contradictions? But faith's confidence is this—that *our* God holds the thread of life. All is perfect light before *Him*, if dark and inexplicable to us. "He knows the way He taketh." Ever interpret His actions, however in themselves inexplicable, by His love, manifested at the cross. The character of His ways is simply the reflex of His nature—light and love. "All things work together for good" (Rom. viii. 28). Trace all up direct to the source which is God—the God who gave His only Son; there rest. Occupation with second causes or agents and instruments shuts God out of the scene. No sorrow can reach you till He bids it come; poverty cannot touch you till He allows it; friendships cannot be severed unless He permits; loved ones cannot die till He withdraws His hand; and hearts cannot break till He sovereignly allows. "As for God, His way is perfect."

Christ was "a Man of Sorrows." God had only one Son without sin; but He never had one who was without sorrow (Heb. xii. 8), "whereof all are partakers. The blessed Lord is with us in the wildest storm, in the darkest night. The most awful hurricane can no more engulf us than it can *Him* (Mark iv. 37-41). He who walks on the sea (Matt. xiv. 25) as the Lord of the raging elements, sleeps in the midst of His own, whilst winds and waves dash around (Mark iv. 37, 38).

Tribulation cannot separate us from the love of God, but the love of God will by-and-by separate us for ever from tribulation and set us in eternal felicity. In the meantime the love of Christ leads us on and through life's trials "more than conquerors" (Rom. viii. 35-39). Do not allow yourself to be wrapt up in a selfish sorrow. God turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends (chap. xlii. 10), and gave him "twice as much as he had before." Wilderness lessons are

meant for others as well as yourself; see to it, that you learn them well, and hand over the fruit of them to fellow-pilgrims (2 Cor. i. 3-6). The trying of your faith (James i. 3) will soon be over; then the trial of it, "more precious than of gold," will be publicly recompensed in the coming day (1 Peter i. 7). W. S.

## Correspondence.

### "CHURCH ORDER."

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

Several letters have lately appeared in *The Witness* on matters of church order and discipline. No doubt we are all bound to obey what is written for our guidance; but, unfortunately, there is ignorance and confusion everywhere, and withal, mistakes. It is to be feared that those who are taking up, and urging with much earnestness, these things, forget they are putting the cart before the horse; that unless there is a holy, heavenly life, according to the vocation wherewith we are called, following the example and keeping the commandments of the Lord, and walking soberly, righteously, and godly, everything will fall about our ears; whereas, if what I have referred to exists, all the rest will fall instinctively into its own place, and the churches walking in the fear of God and comfort of the Holy Ghost be edified.

C.

### "COME AND HELP US."

*A letter to God's gifted "servants," from some of the little gatherings of the Lord's people.*

DEAR BRETHREN,

On behalf of some of the little gatherings, I wish to urge their claims on you who are the servants of our Lord.

It is a very sad, but undeniable fact, that we but very seldom (in some cases never) can get a teacher to come to us, and one brother expressed an opinion to the effect that it was not worth while to come to small gatherings.

We ask you time after time to come to us, but some EXCUSE is always given; and, after a time, very sorrowfully we come to the conclusion that though the Lord is in the midst of the twos and the threes gathered to His name, His gifted servants despise us, forgetting His Word, which says, "The servant is NOT greater than his Lord" (John xv. 20).

The Lord could stoop to speak to *one* woman; Philip goes to *one* man; but alas, now anything under twenty or thirty is considered beneath the notice of many who have the gift of teaching large gatherings. Large meetings in the city can obtain the joy and profit of your teaching for *weeks* at a time; but we, not even for *one* hour in a year.

We are responsible to our Lord to ask you to come and give us the benefit of the gift entrusted to you. If you refuse (as you have so often done in the past), we ask you to remember that, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." Those that compose

these little gatherings are many of them very poor, and have but little time; and in the case where these meetings are several miles from a city, they cannot attend the large gatherings where alone they can hear you. Their desire is to do so; but if you will not come to the little meetings, they are entirely deprived of the benefit of your gift.

I trust that you will be much exercised over your responsibility to the forties, the thirties, and the tens—the threes and the twos even—who are seeking amidst every discouragement to please your Master and theirs.

I know that it is humbling to the flesh to attend small meetings; but, though this is true, you will get spiritual joy and eternal reward by so doing.—I remain, yours in our Lord,

A Christian who gathers with nine others to the Name.

“WOMEN’S RIGHTS.”

MR. CALDWELL refers to “women’s rights” in *The Witness* for November, and if I would not weary my reader, I will speak of the same. These are days that greatly need a stirring up of “women’s rights.” Where shall we go to find them? To Proverbs xxxi. There are the rights God has given a woman. There is the line drawn for a woman “whose price is above rubies.”

If those who contend for what are called “women’s rights” would quietly consider the position and responsibility which God has given her, it would be well.

Let us look at her calling for a little while.

Is she a mother? Who can grasp what lies in her hands?

If my reader looks over the history of the mothers of the Bible, he will see some beautiful characters who had the privilege (as have all godly mothers) of training children for the work of the Lord; and if she leaves her sons and daughters in the hands of others, and goes to work outside, words cannot express the harm done; and in the end it can only be said by her, “Mine own vineyard have I not kept.” On the other hand, see the power a wicked mother has over her son (2 Chron. xxii. 3). It has been said, “If there were more Hannahs there would be more Samuels.”

If the father fails in many ways, and even neglects his family, there is hope if the mother is faithful; but many will be heard saying, “It’s a hopeless case,” if she is the failing one.

Would to God my sister would awake to the mighty work she has to do.

Is she a growing girl who has nothing to do with the work we have been speaking of? Let her learn the work she ought to know. What is that? The “work of her HANDS.” It is work greatly neglected in these days of learning. Some will say, “There is no need of so much *hand* work, when there is so much machinery.” God’s mind is not changed, and His message is, “Give her of the fruit of her *hands*” (ver. 31); and let her remember education and language, while good in their own place, will prove little use in household duties.

Is she a mistress? Her influence is greatly weakened if she is not at home to carry out Prov. xxxi. 27; and if she cannot dictate to those under her how their work should be done, she, and many others, suffer great loss.

Is she a servant? To her God has sent a message with a gracious promise (Col. iii. 22-24). Things cannot be done to the “glory of God” if not done in the right place and time, and much apparent “fruit” will fall off as useless, while the “fruit of the hands” done by a “woman who feareth the Lord” shall be praised.

A woman is the “weaker vessel,” yet, in some sense, she is also the stronger, for a woman can undo a man’s work, but no man can easily undo her work. If she is one who wears the “ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,” she is a blessing wherever she goes, and her life hides a “multitude of sins”; but if ungodly, or even a troublesome Christian, no telling where her failure will end.

We have brought before us in Revelation a man and woman guilty of the same failure. The Holy Ghost warns the Church against both. Balaam’s sin was clipped in the bud, but Jezebel carried her end to the extreme. W.

Questions and Answers.

We find it necessary to go to press earlier than hitherto, and request our valued correspondents to note that all replies to Questions for our March issue require to be in the hands of the editor not later than the 10th of February.

Replies are invited to the following:—

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?

Who and what were the Nicolaitanes; and to whom does the term refer in the prophetic aspect of the seven epistles to the churches of Asia?

What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for *introducing* those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them?

Is it scriptural to call “the Lord’s Table” “the Father’s Table”?

ON JOINING THE ARMY.

QUESTION 342.—Should a child of God enlist or become a soldier?

Ans. A.—This question has been very often raised, for years past, always in an abstract form. But as it always needs to be applied in some concrete form, it is necessary to lay the matter out more fully. The army is but one

arm of State power. Any reply given to this question must apply equally to the navy, and relatively to the departmental services, the police, &c.; and, still more, to the Crown and its councillors, in whose hands these are all wielded, as the executive. And the reply must also apply to conscript as well as volunteer enlistment; to officers as well as rank and file; to times of danger as well as of peace. And still more important is it to distinguish between the contemplated recruit and his critics, to say nothing of other circumstances affecting the case. In purpose the Lord came to make and promote "Peace on earth"; constructively and resultingly He came "not to send peace but a sword"; so the child of God, will, like his Lord, seek peace, make peace (not by force, but by love), and live in peace, as much as lieth in him, with all men. If compelled to obey and serve as a soldier, he will, as others have done, avowedly follow after peace, and most probably be transferred to the ambulance corps. But bear the Cross he must, in any case, and warfare there must needs be; only let our weapons not be carnal, willingly used, but spiritual, and earnestly and prayerfully used, letting the result rest with God.

But as every case differs from others when all the circumstances are discovered, it behoves anyone who would judge a recruit to carefully possess himself of the whole case, and then to see, as carefully, what the Scriptures say upon it, and not to apply the answers of man, however gifted, to an abstract question, to it; for the Scriptures, in form as well as in substance, are alone profitable, and sufficient to perfect the man of God and settle his mind practically. And until it is settled it should be remembered that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." G. C.

**Ans. B.**—Does a child of God ask the question? and, does he desire to enlist and become a soldier? If not, the question is merely speculative, and unnecessary. John the Baptist said to soldiers who had asked him, "And what shall we do?" "Do violence to no man" (Luke iii. 14). A very quiet way of telling the soldiers to lay down their arms. But I am aware that another translation (seldom used) is, "oppress no one." Jesus once said to Peter, "Put up thy sword again into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. xxvi. 52). The profession of arms may lead to worldly glory and a Victoria Cross; but it is not the best way to obtain the amaranthine crown, nor "the crown of righteousness" from the righteous Judge (1 Peter v. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). The subject on which the question is asked is not in the New Testament. L. D. G.

**Note.**—One may be in a position which they desire to be freed from, but for which deliverance they have to wait on God for the *how* and the *when* (1 Cor. vii. 21).

One may be, by conscription or otherwise, forced into a position of great difficulty; and God, if trusted, has promised to open up "a way of escape" (1 Cor. x. 13); but it is quite another thing for one to put themselves voluntarily and deliberately in a position which may at any moment involve the necessity of being the active agent in taking the life of others.

There are many departments in which the State may

be served, involving no act of necessity injurious to the conscience or repugnant to the spirit of a Christian.

But the State, like any other employer of labour, may be involved in courses that are unrighteous and ungodly, and a Christian cannot be an unintelligent tool. He cannot regard offensive warfare as having the approval of God, and can, therefore, only pray and endeavour that he may be kept apart from it as far as it is possible to be.

All arguments based on Old Testament principles are necessarily misleading. Then the State was the commonwealth of Israel, composed of the people of Jehovah. They went to war at the command of the Lord, and their battles were "the wars of the Lord." The people of God now are a spiritual people, united on no principle of nationality, but on the principle of Divine life, whose warfare is not carnal and earthly, but spiritual and heavenly. The former is typical of, and analogous to, the latter, but essentially contrasted.

For the Christian individually, or the Church corporately, to assert its rights at the point of the sword, is to depart from its heavenly calling and character.—E.D.

#### AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION.

**QUESTION 343.**—Please explain the apparent contradiction between 2 Sam. xxiv. 24 ("fifty shekels of silver") and 1 Chron. xxi. 24, 25 ("six hundred shekels of gold").

NEARLY every student of Scripture is familiar with instances in Scripture where, in two different records of one event, there are variations which seem, at first sight, to be discrepancies, but which are perfectly reconcilable when the standpoint of the writer, and the object he has specially in view, are taken into account.

In 2 Sam. xxiv., the record only alludes to the incident of the threshing-floor being purchased for the erection of the altar at the word of the Lord by Gad the prophet. In 1 Chron. xxi., the inspired writer goes on to record a subsequent matter, viz., that when David had seen how the Lord answered him there, he adopted that permanently as the place of sacrifice, and, further on, the site of "the house of the Lord God." Compare 1 Chron. xxii. 1 and 2 Chron. iii. 1.

This outcome of the first incident is evidently not contemplated in Samuel, and hence mention is made only of the price paid for the threshing-floor and oxen prior to the first offering, by which David learned that his prayer was heard and answered. There can be no doubt that the transaction of 2 Sam. xxiv. led to a much more important transaction, in which not only "the threshing-floor and oxen" but "the place" was purchased in perpetuity as the site of the future temple.

The enormous difference between the two sums is thus fully accounted for. Most apparent discrepancies disappear before similar careful investigation, and display, not the imperfection, but the accuracy of Scripture, and the carelessness, if not the enmity, of its critics.

One of our correspondents, whose reply we do not insert, simply accepts the position, and states that it is not an "apparent" but a *real* discrepancy. We hope he will be convinced by the above that false accusations against the Word of God are not to be so lightly received!—E.D.

## TIDINGS FROM THE GARENGANZE.

GLASGOW, January 17, 1890.

DEAR BROTHER,—I have just received very interesting letters from brother Swan, Garenganze, and send you lengthy extracts from same. May our blessed Lord use them to stir the hearts of God's people to a more prayerful and deeper interest in His work than has yet been known amongst us. Hitherto the work in other lands has been too much regarded as a kind of interesting excitement: neglected if it lacked this, applauded and favoured when this was supplied; but may not God be seeking to lead His people and Church to *dead earnestness* in the carrying on of His great work in "the world," and hence a solemn call? Thus the deaths of brothers Johnston, Morris, and Gall. The taking part in the work of the Lord is a stern reality. Are God's people prepared to go into it in this spirit, a life and death struggle? or, is all this to be left to the brethren and sisters who go to other lands? T. M'L.

Mountain View, Garenganze Country,  
CENTRAL AFRICA, November, 23, 1888.

DEAR MR. M'LAREN,—The last letter I was able to send home left here September 3, and in it I spoke of the sores on brother Faulknor's feet as still being very bad. However, so far as the said sores are concerned, I am thankful to say that, through much care and attention, they are now nearly healed; but I am sorry to have to inform you that he has caught one of the most loathsome diseases I have seen since coming to Africa. It is called "Munono" by the natives, and is very prevalent in these parts. The disease is quite new to me, and I am utterly at a loss to know what to do for him.

For long we have been living on very little else but beans and mush; but some days ago I was able to buy a small goat, for which I was very thankful, as brother Faulknor needs nourishing food. This coarse food does all right when one is *well*, but has no attraction for a sick man.

March 15, 1889.

I have had two or three slight attacks of fever since I last wrote, but at present, thank God, I am feeling well and strong. Brother Faulknor, also, though still very weak and helpless, is somewhat improved; many of the Munono sores are drying up.

Brethren ought to think well, and *pray* much, before they take the step to come out here. There are many comforts to be given up at home, and many difficulties to be overcome here, and it is only a *firm* and *deeply settled* conviction that the Lord has called them to the work that can enable them to go joyfully on in His service year after year. . . . The chief continues to be very friendly with us. . . . He has been putting a great many people to death lately, for various superstitious reasons; some of these I saw, but will not attempt to describe, for one turns sick at heart at the very thought of such scenes.

On the 7th inst., shortly after dark, two messengers came in great haste from the chief, requesting me to go at once as he was very sick. The boys and I set off at once. When we arrived, I found the house full of his wives, gathered to express sympathy. He was suffering from a sharp attack of fever, so I gave him a good dose

of quinine and a purgative, after which he requested me to stay all night. A stranger sight I think I have never seen. The chief lay sleeping in the centre of the large house, and round about him sat his head wives; to the left sat a woman divining (keeping up a kind of doleful song, to which all replied in a sort of chorus); to the right sat the chief's sons, and I in their midst; and all around the outside sat his slave wives. . . . As I looked round, my heart went out toward the poor creatures. They know nothing of the great God who loves them, nor of the sympathising Jesus who died for them. So, while they were engaged with their enchantments, I lifted up my heart in prayer to Him whom we have learned to call "Abba, Father," that He, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," might shine into their hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; at the same time asking Him to pity them in their ignorance, and restore unto them their suffering chief if agreeable to His will. The next morning found him a little improved. I have visited him a few times since, and he seems all right again. The morning after I watched with him he gave me twenty-six yards of strong broadcloth.

Our stock of medicines has proved very useful indeed. I have many calls to attend to the sick, and, as soon as I am able to speak well, these will no doubt prove good opportunities for telling the people of Jesus. I am at present attending to a Yeko, and the first visit I paid to him, I found him sitting outside his hut, supported by one of his wives. By his side sat an old woman with a rope tied round her neck, and they said to me that she had bewitched him. If he die, she will immediately be executed.

The old man, whom Muside sent to live with brother Arnot when he first came, is very poorly. You will no doubt know that brother Arnot had to cut off his hand at the wrist; now, I am sorry to say, he has met with another accident to the same limb. He has attacks of epilepsy, and last month, during an attack, rolled into the fire and severely burned himself, especially the unfortunate arm, to such an extent that the bone is bare for three inches. I have been dressing it, and it is not looking nearly so bad; but I doubt if he will get over it. Since he has turned so weak I have made special efforts to reach his soul, and am thankful to say he speaks more freely about death and eternity. I am not without hope that the Lord is dealing with him.

One of the greatest difficulties with Africans is to prove to their satisfaction that God loves them. It is not very difficult to silence them and show how untrue are their ideas of God; but to silence does not of necessity mean to convince. One day, while working in a dangerous position on the roof of my house, I happened to remark, "I must be careful and not fall, for if my head comes in contact with those stones there would be no more building for me." They thought it wrong to speak in that way. I then spoke a little about death, and how the Lord had taken all fear away. "What," said they, "do you want to go to God? If you knew He were coming would you not flee?" "No," I answered; "for He loves me." I then sought to prove His love, and that He wished to take away their sins, and that why they feared God was because

their hearts told them they were sinners. I sought to prove His love for them in three ways. First, if He had not loved man He never would have created him. Second, He sends sunshine and rain, making the earth to bring forth her increase; thus supplying us all with food. Third, Above all, He proved His love by sending His Son into the world to tell us how to be saved; and, finally, allowed Him to die to secure our salvation. After this they had nothing more to say; but it is difficult to know if it convinced them, as, often after, having spoken to them in a similar strain, and fancied from their words they were almost convinced, in a few days they have brought up the same questions. However, it is ours to sow, even though in weakness, and sometimes with a heavy heart; but it is God's to give the increase. Some Biheans and Bailundas came to see me, and, in the course of conversation, the question as to what was fair and unfair trading arose. After having expressed my thoughts, I was somewhat surprised and greatly delighted to hear one say, "Yehovah teaches them that"; and, turning round, he said, "See these boys in Bailunda, if they happen to find a needle in the path they never think of keeping it without first searching for the owner." This may seem a small thing in the eyes of some, but it is "light"; and, little as it is, it shines very brightly in the darkness here. God bless and encourage His servants to go on with Himself. "The entrance of His words" must "give light."

We have had some trouble with one of our girls running away lately. She says she wants to go and live with the chief's wives, but we are very loth to part with her, and she is about the farthest advanced in the school. Join your prayers with ours that the Lord may make them all contented and happy with us.

Brother F. is improving in health.—Yours in the Lord Jesus,  
CHARLES A. SWAN.

[Letter left Garenganze, May, 1889.]

## DEATH OF JOHN HAMBLETON.

JOHN HAMBLETON fell asleep in Jesus on Lord's-day, December 8th, 1889, at 10 p.m., at his residence, Foster Street, Geelong, Victoria, aged 69 years. This grand old warrior has entered into rest. "Absent from the body, at home with the Lord,"—with Christ, which is very far better.

After about thirty-five years' valiant toil for the Lord in the old country, our dear brother came to this colony. For about five years he laboured in Victoria unceasingly in Bible-carriage work—Gospel preaching and edifying his fellow-saints. His continuous zeal and energy put us all to shame, provoking many to love and good works. The vigour, freshness, and power of his ministry of the Word of God, whether to saint or sinner, by the grace of God was maintained to the last. On the Lord's-day before his departure he preached three times with remarkable power. A month before his decease he took part in united meetings for believers. After reading Luke xxiv.—"The walk to Emmaus,"—he exhorted us to be continually looking off unto *Jesus only*; and showed that peace, joy, and power was the result of being occupied with our risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Two beloved sisters in Christ, in Melbourne, who loved him much, and oft entertained him and his dear wife, told him they thought he worked much too hard, and that he should come to stay with them and rest for a while. He replied, "I have got my house and book-room in order, dug my garden (about  $\frac{1}{2}$ -acre), and planted it with fruit trees; and now I'll just go home and send some boxes of books off to the Bible carriage, and then take a little rest." He little thought at the time, that he would, as he often loved to express it, be

"Bathing his weary soul  
In seas of heavenly bliss."

One of his last lowly efforts was to pack a box of books for one of the Bible carriages, put it on a wheel-barrow, and wheel it to the station, about 500 yards away from his house. Mrs. Hambleton remonstrating with him, he replied, "It must be done, and who else is there to do it." She watched him go off up the street with his load, and on the wheel going over a stone his load tilted over causing him a severe strain. No doubt this hard work and exposure hastened his end. But whether digging, or wheeling Bibles to the station, he judged it was work that must be done, and did it heartily as to the Lord; and from the Lord Himself he will receive his rich reward. A renewal of an old trouble of an inflammatory nature carried him to heaven and home, after a week of extreme anguish and suffering. He was most tenderly cared for by his dearly loved wife, and others of the Geelong brethren and sisters. He retained his reason to the last, recognising and speaking at times to those who ministered to him. On Saturday he called his dear wife to him, telling her he had received his call from the Lord, and giving her his parting blessing and instructions.

During his last hours, on account of his great weakness, he said very little to anyone. At one time he said brokenly and faintly:—"God's blessing be upon you all;" and a little later, "He that shall come will come and will not tarry." He gradually became weaker, and peacefully passed away at 10 o'clock.

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep!  
From which none ever wake to weep;  
A calm and undisturbed repose,  
Unhindered by the last of foes."

A few Christians came from Melbourne and Ballarat to join with the Geelong saints in committing the precious body of our dearly loved and esteemed brother to the grave and to the care of the Lord who redeemed it.

Our dear brother's life of labour and toil for the Lord since his conversion, had been such, that at his grave there was scarcely any room for tears. We were able to glorify and praise our God for him—for his past life and labours, for his present rest and bliss with Christ, and for his future satisfaction and eternal reward in that day for which we look. The Bible carriage work will be carried on by our brethren: John Baird, Frank Brewster, John Fergusson, and others; Mrs. Hambleton still residing at the Geelong depot, and helping on the work. It is interesting to remark that a Chinese brother, lately converted, was with dear John during some of his last hours, and also was at the grave. Our beloved brother took a deep interest in the welfare of the Chinese in these colonies. They were much on his heart before the Lord.  
H. D. H.



## THE LORD JESUS AT BETHANY.

LUKE x. 38-42; JOHN xi., xii.

FROM AN ADDRESS BY THE EDITOR.

FROM these scriptures we learn that the Lord Jesus was no stranger to that household at Bethany. He was personally known to each member of it. Not only was there always an open door, but also open hearts for the blessed Lord there. In Luke we see that although Mary and Martha both loved the Lord, Martha was occupied more with her service than with the Lord. How often the Lord's servants are thus "cumbered about much serving." The Lord Jesus should always be the object of our service, and we should ever seek to please Him in all that we do for Him. "Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word" (verse 39). This yielded more joy to the Lord's heart than all Martha's active service. When we get occupied with our service, or anything about ourselves, it invariably leads to judging others. It is a low sign of grace in the soul when we are occupied in judging our brethren. I would earnestly warn my fellow-believers against this too common sin.

It is easy to go the round of all we know, and not to have a good word to say of any.

The Lord gently rebukes Martha and tells her of *the one thing needful*, i.e., personal intercourse with Himself. We may be laid hold of and put into prison for faithfulness to the truth, as the apostle Paul and many others; but, even in such circumstances, we can hold sweet communion with the Lord. If we do not sit at the feet of the Master we are sure to become cumbered with our service. The world, with its cares and deceitful lusts, will, if we allow it, come in and hinder us from sitting at His feet to hear His word. But, when we are fixed in heart to take our place at the Master's feet, then nothing can take that good part from us. That is what we may enjoy through "thick and thin," through sunshine and cold, through evil and through good report.

I wish you to turn now to John xi. 5, and note these words—"Now Jesus loved MARTHA, and her sister, and Lazarus." Although Martha had not risen to the height

of Mary in communion with the Lord, and although the Lord had cause to rebuke her, nevertheless she was a very special object of His love. They were all alike loved of the Lord Jesus. The message they sent to Him was, "He whom *Thou lovest* is sick." It was this consciousness of Christ's love that made that household happy. So will it ever be wherever there is a household or an assembly, each member of which realises the love of Christ; that will be a blessed and a happy circle.

Here we are gathered around our Lord to remember Himself, each having tasted that the Lord is gracious. How blessed to know that however the Lord may have had to chasten and rebuke us for our naughty ways, however little we may have risen to His desire for communion with Himself, yet, even as we sit here before Him, we know that He loves us.

The consciousness of His love produced blessed fellowship and love one to another.

Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover. Evidently He delighted to come there. It was a green spot in the wilderness to Him. There those dwelt who seemed to know Him best. "There they made Him a supper" (verse 2). The supper was made for Him. It was not for their friends and acquaintances, but for Jesus. And so I trust we have not come together this morning merely to have happy fellowship with each other; but, making Him the centre of attraction, to bring Him the worship of loving and true hearts, the precious fruit that His own grace has begotten in us. If His glory is our first object He will see that we lack nothing. If during the past week and this morning we have been sitting at the feet of the Master hearing His Word, and having communion with Himself, then we shall be in a fit condition to worship and serve Him. Coming with our basket of first-fruits we shall have something to present, "by Him," which shall indeed be well-pleasing to God.

There were in that household three true hearts that knew His love, and had drunk in His grace, who prepared a feast for their Lord. It was the most blessed service that any could be engaged in. What condescension that He should accept it. It is a feast to our Lord to have His beloved ones gathered around

Him to pour out before Him the gratitude and worship of their redeemed hearts. The Lord said to His disciples when gathered for the first time to eat the Lord's supper, "With desire I have desired to eat . . . this before I suffer." He had been looking forward to this feast with joy. There they sat at His feet and heard His word (see xiii. to xvii. of John). And is it not so still? An occasion which He desires, a joy that He anticipates of fellowship with us as well as we with Him. "Martha served." She was not serving alone here. When each Israelite brought his basket of first-fruits to the tabernacle to present to Jehovah, it was not done without preparation. When the Lord comes, others come with Him; therefore, there needed to be preparation. The supper is not made "on the spur of the moment." That supper had been the subject of their forethought, and care, and happy ministry. They did not turn round and say that Martha did it; but all had a share in it. It was a fellowship of those who loved His name and found their joy in His presence. Martha served; but, whilst serving, we do not read here that she was cumbered. She was now realising that Jesus was the object of her service. "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him." The one who had been dead was now raised from the dead and seated at the table with the Lord Jesus. What a blessed place that was. God has not merely raised us from the dead, out of the corruption of the grave; but He has seated us with Him at His table. David called lame Mephibosheth from his place of distance and separation to sit at his own table. This is a little picture of the honour put upon us. As those raised with Christ we are seated at His table, and our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, and with one another by the Holy Spirit. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, *very costly*, and anointed the feet of Jesus," &c. (verse 3). "Thy Name is as ointment poured forth" (Song i. 3). What is it that gives sweetness and fragrance in the assembly of God? Is it not the infinite merits of that blessed Name made known in all its preciousness to our hearts by the Holy Spirit? The pouring out of this ointment is just a type of worship—the outpouring of hearts filled with the love

and enraptured with the loveliness of Christ. May the Lord give us to know *the value* that He has set upon that precious Name.

Judas, who had no love in his heart to the Lord, could not understand this act of Mary; he regarded it as waste. The more fully we are devoted to the Lord, the less we shall be understood by the world, and even by carnal Christians. Judas, who thus spake against this act of a loving heart in fellowship with Christ, was not alone in his opposition; even the disciples appear to have chimed in with him, and the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus to death. Judas within, and priests without, were all opposed to that little household because Jesus was there. We may make up our minds for this, that if our hearts are occupied with our Lord, if we are seeking to follow, or to honour Him, we are sure to have the world against us. But it is blessed to have Him in our midst. He answers all the accusations of Satan. The Lord answers Judas. He takes up the cause of Mary. She has no need to defend herself. May we learn from this to leave our Lord to plead our cause against the enemy. If we looked to Him more to undertake for us against Satan and the world, we would find how surely He would step in and plead our cause.

The enmity of the chief priests was stirred up because the resurrection life in Lazarus was leading many to believe on Jesus. Beloved, if the resurrection life of Christ is manifest by us in love to Him, and fellowship with Him, that will bring out the enmity of the world toward us; but in the midst of it all, we shall know His presence with us, His love to comfort our hearts, and His power to enable us to confess His Name and maintain His truth, and thereby glorify Him.

---

THE Lord Jesus *always* loved Peter, even when he was self-confident. He *warned him in love*: but Peter *fell*. The Good Shepherd was faithful. And, observe: it was after Peter had known, not only *saving grace*, but *restoring mercy*, that the Lord said to him, "Feed My sheep . . . Feed My lambs" (Read I Peter v. 1-11; Psalm xxiii.).

[The following paper arrived too late to be inserted as a reply to Question 343, on page 30; but as it forms part of a series, and contains some interesting critical points not referred to in our reply, we insert it in full, notwithstanding that in the main it corresponds exactly with the answer given in our last.]

## DAVID'S PURCHASE FROM ARAUNAH.

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS BY A. P. MACDONALD, No. 9.

2 Sam. xxiv. 24. "So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."

1 Chron. xxi. 25. "So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight."

REALLY, the difficulty here is to find the difficulty, although the two passages seem to have puzzled a number of readers, who find an "apparent contradiction" between them. The difference between the two sums of money quoted is scarcely more evident than that between the two purchases for which they were respectively paid.

David bought THE THRESHING-FLOOR AND THE OXEN for fifty shekels of silver. This, it is to be presumed, he paid on the spot, with a view to the immediate accomplishment of his purpose, namely, to build there an altar to Jehovah, and offer up burnt-offerings and peace-offerings thereon. But it cannot have been convenient to either party that the king should continue to possess a small spot of ground in the middle of the farm-lands belonging to Araunah (or Ornan). The bargain was therefore completed by the former acquiring THE PLACE at the price of six hundred shekels of gold, leaving the latter free to establish himself elsewhere.

That there was a longer or shorter interval between the two events seems likely when the circumstances attending the transaction are taken into account. This would sufficiently explain the existence of two distinct, but not contradictory, narratives.

The difference between the expressions employed is so clear in our English translation, that there need be no confusion on the subject, and any reference to authorities might well be deemed superfluous. An examination of these, however, makes assurance doubly sure.

The LXX. version of 2 Sam. xxiv. 24 reads, *ton halōna kai tous boas*—"the threshing-floor and the oxen," as in English. In the passage in Chronicles it has *peri tou topou* as the more

probable reading (the other is, *en tō topō autou*). Anyone who knows enough Greek to consult a lexicon or concordance will easily satisfy himself that *topos* (from which is derived the English word "topography") has a very extended signification, being used for a place, a district, or even a region or country. Here *ho topos* refers to the fields, all and whole, on which grew the grain which was threshed, *en tō halōni*.

The Hebrew words in the two texts abundantly justify the ancient and modern renderings.

*Gōrēn* (threshing-floor) occurs Ruth iii. 2, 3, 6, 14. This, in the East, is a round level plot of ground in the open air, where the corn is trodden by the oxen.

*Māqōm* (place) is used in writing of Shechem (Gen. xii. 6); the Cities of the Plain (Gen. xviii. 24; xix. 12, 14); Laban's neighbourhood at Haran (Gen. xxix. 22); the Laish district (Jud. xviii. 10), &c. In the case before us "the place" was MORIAH, unto which very place it is generally believed that Abraham went to offer up Isaac (Gen. xxii. 2), and on which it is certain that Solomon afterwards built the house of the LORD (2 Chron. iii. 1).

## THE SPIRIT OF LIFE;

OR,

### A Sixfold View of the Dealings of the Holy Spirit with Believers.

BY J. HINON IRVING.

[THIRD PAPER.]

#### V. His Confirmative Work.

"For the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."—Rom. viii. 16.

THE renewed one is the possessor of three "spirits." The natural, intelligent spirit: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the *spirit* of man which is in him?" The supernatural spirit, imparted at regeneration: "That which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*." And the Holy Spirit of God which ever abideth in him: "Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us." It is by the Spirit that Father and Son abide in those whom

they have (for their own glory) fashioned as new creatures.

The Spirit testifies to the believer, giving the assurance of relationship to, and acceptance with, God: "For the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). This witness is confirmative of the saint, confirming him in faith and hope. This confirmation is not the special privilege or possession of a few only, but is the birthright of all who are sons. Just as all whose names are in the book of life of the Lamb are redeemed, forgiven, justified, and have eternal life, so also have all, in greater or less degree, the testimony of the Spirit assuring them of their filial relationship to God. It may be well to observe here that His witness does not consist altogether of His fruit, which is seen in the life; nor does His testimony confine itself merely to assuring the saved of their faith in Christ. That He does; but that is not all. He does far more; and hence His witness is twofold: direct and indirect. *Direct* to the natural spirit: He bears "witness with our spirit," not by an audible voice, nor by producing an ecstasy of religious or spiritual fervour, much less by visions and supernatural voices, but to the heart by an inward testimony which cannot be mistaken by those who receive it; an act—nay, a series of acts—impressing the spiritual and moral faculties in such a manner as to produce the conviction, and give the assurance of sonship, and thus confirm the soul in its heavenly origin and destiny.

"The Spirit answers to the blood,  
And tells me I am born of God."

Who can tell the value of this testimony, or imagine the loss the Christian would sustain were it withdrawn? "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me" has gone, though not of course intelligently, from many a broken-hearted David after falling into sin, and the comforting witness has been withheld.

His witness is also *indirect*. This harmonises with, and is confirmatory of His inward and direct testimony; and it arises from the believer being assured by that which is produced in his life, as the result of His indwelling and outflowing.

Where He abides, there must, of necessity, be—though in varying degree it is true—love,

joy, peace, and the rest of His precious fruits. There will be an inward and an outward obedience to the truth, the twofold result of which will be a walking in love towards fellow-saints, and in wisdom before the world. Of course, it will be obvious to all who are spiritual that the clearness and constancy of this testimony will depend very much upon the manner of the life lived; for a disobedient, self-willed course of conduct will, for the time being, quench the comforting assurance of the Spirit. Therefore, the child of God needs to jealously guard his walk; for the exterior and interior testimony will act and react upon each other, so that to keep the heart and life with diligence is to conserve the confirming witness of the Holy Spirit.

We must not close this without just referring to a third witness which is given to the Christian, viz., that of the written Word. Apart from the testimony of the Word, faith would be in danger of degenerating into—nay, it would be—mere mysticism, and truth and error would be indistinguishable.

The outward witness of the Word will never be in conflict with the inward witness of the Spirit. These two silver trumpets make one harmonious note, for their sound is never discordant. To obey the Word, then, in the letter and in the spirit of it, gives a threefold assuring testimony to the saint of his Divine relationship; so that to him who so walks as to please God is given a threefold witness—the Spirit, the Word, and the Life; and these three are, in essence, one. Thus is his faith confirmed; and his soul established in grace and love.

This is a line of subjective teaching which we fear has been sadly overlooked by many. If objective truth is constantly dwelt upon to the exclusion of subjective, the Lord's people will eventually become one-sided and unpractical. Of course, if we reverse the order the result will still be the same. We therefore need to employ the balances of the sanctuary and rightly weigh and divide the Word of Truth, giving to the objective truth the first place, whilst not excluding that which, according to the Divine order, is secondary. The centre of the former is Christ, whilst the centre of the latter is the Spirit.

Christ in heaven is the One from whom all objective truth radiates. The Spirit in the heart of the child of God is the spring from whence flow those streams of subjective truth briefly referred to in the preceding pages.

## VI. His Conductive Work.

“*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*” (Rom. viii. 14, R.V.)

“*If ye are led by the Spirit of God, ye are not under the law*” (Gal. v. 18).

It is the privilege of all who are sons of God to be so led of the Spirit as to prove they are such. To be led of Him does not make them sons, but it constitutes them such evidentially; in the same way as a forgiving spirit, and godly separation from forbidden fellowships prove them to be sons of their Father in heaven (Matt. v. ; 2 Cor. v. 14-17). It will be clear to all that believers, and believers only, are led by the Spirit of Life. Just as the faithful servant of faithful Abraham led the bride across the desert from the land beyond the river to that of the promise; or, as the Pillar of the Presence guided the elect nation into the same country, so the Spirit of God conducts the individuals of the chosen church through this dreary desert “to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away.” How does He lead? is often asked. Our answer to this must, of necessity, be brief. He conducts the believer through this life by *acting* upon the mind, and fixing thought upon those things which are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, and good (Phil. iv. 8). By His power, *impressing* the will, seeking thus to bend it beneath His own gentle sway, so that He may lead in continual triumph. He, and He alone, of the yielded will is fully led of the Spirit. He conducts the life by *working* upon the spiritual faculties and instincts of the renewed mind, giving birth to desires and longings which can only find their perfect satisfaction in communion with the Living One. Also by *influencing* the motives, elevating them, and causing them to be unselfish and disinterested in character, stamping them with this motto, “For the glory of God.” Again, His leading may be known by

His *fostering* in the mind a sincere desire for the use of simple, true, and pure speech, which is as far removed from the exaggerated style of expression, which, sad to say, finds such currency in certain religious circles of the day, as the east is from the west. And lastly, He leads by *impressing* the Christ-life upon the mental and moral being; so that the interior, and, in consequence, the exterior life becomes, in some degree, a reproduction of His. All those secret desires and aspirations to magnify Christ in the body, which belong to the true believer, are the fruit of his inward working, in order that this end may be accomplished. O beloved children of God, may all our faculties, senses, and powers, be surrendered to be acted upon by the Spirit of Life, who has been given to us for the very purpose that our lives in all their relationships and responsibilities may be led of Himself. God in His Word sets before us this ideal life, and shows us the possibility and secret of its attainment—the new life within craves with an irrepressible craving after its accomplishment; the Spirit of Christ yearns after, and strives for, its perfection. The Lord Jesus died, rose again, and lives to this end. The Divine Father looks for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose in its manifestation. There is no finality or perfection in this life; it is one of progressive development. No double-mindedness as to the truth and ways of God can have a lasting place in it; singleness of aim, fixedness of purpose, and a steadfast adherence to the truth, will ever be salient features of a life led by the Spirit. The steps that lead to the portals of this blessed life are these:—A perfect receptivity of mind with regard to the whole of the God-breathed word; a submission of the will to His own; an entire surrender of the life, with all its issues, to Him; and a consecration of the being to be penetrated with His power through the Holy Spirit.

Can we fail to see how solid and strong in character, restful and peaceful in spirit, powerful in its influence, and fruitful in its results, such a life must be; affording strength to the weak, encouragement to the young and inexperienced in the ways of the Lord; convincing to the unsaved, and effectual in silencing the empty babblings of those who

oppose themselves to eternal things. Such a life as we have tried to describe is involved and outlined in the words of the wise. "Trust in Jehovah with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 5, 6).

## THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, BY J. R. C.

### I Corinthians xvi. 1.

IN this chapter the apostle proceeds to give plain practical instructions to the saints at Corinth, and not to them only but, as we gather from the address of the epistle (chap. i. 2) to us also, and to all.

The "collection" referred to here seems to have had special reference to the need of the poor saints at Jerusalem (see Rom. xv. 25-27). Then they had been passing through times of trial; they were poor whilst the Corinthians had "abundance" (2 Cor. viii. 14). There was much that Satan could work upon to separate in heart the Jewish and Gentile believers. Jewish prejudices were by no means extinct. They were deep rooted and hard to get rid of. At Antioch, where first the two were blended into one fellowship, and where the divinely-abolished distinction was submerged in the God-given title of "Christian," we see how strongly these feelings sought to reassert themselves, how Peter yielded and separated from the assembly, and Barnabas also was carried away for the time (see Gal. ii. 11-14).

The faithfulness of Paul prevented, by the mercy of God, at that early date, an open schism. And, doubtless, it was with this tendency full in view that the apostle so urges upon the churches of the Gentiles this expression of love towards the church at Jerusalem. He would seek to bind around them all the "uniting bond of love."

If there are any more liable than others to judge us and separate from us, we ought all the more to show love in the Lord to them, and thus, as far as possible, hinder the working of the leaven of division.

Verse 2. The fashion of the world and carnal religion is to have some eminent and eloquent man to preach what is called a "charity sermon," and so, under the impulse of the moment, to secure a large collection.

But such is not the way of the Spirit. The apostle warns against special gatherings on the occasion of his visit.

Giving to the Lord is to be no mere matter of impulse, or reserved for a special occasion. Rather should it be a regular habitual service, a well-considered, conscientious, and yet thoroughly spontaneous acknowledgment of the Lord's claims upon us and all that we have.

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."

I presume this refers to weekly wages, or a weekly calculation of a man's earnings, and the laying aside a fixed proportion of the same for the Lord. I commend to you this scriptural way.

But some may say, "Am I not the Lord's steward, and does not all I possess belong to Him." That is true; and if the Lord requires from us, for any special service, all that we possess, it is but giving Him back His own, and it is our highest privilege to fully own His claim.

But our earnings, whether large or small, should be applied in a right and scriptural way. The first-fruit is the Lord's, and he will never be a loser who lays aside *first* from his earnings that which in his heart he willingly devotes to Him. But it is the duty of every man who has a household to provide for those whom the Lord has entrusted to his care. He who fails in this "denies the faith" and is "worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8). This is not a denial of the Lord's claims upon him, but administering the stewardship entrusted to him as the Lord directs.

But we know how apt we are to let the pressing needs of the family come in and take the first place; so much so, as to leave little or nothing to be given freely to the Lord for the need of His servants, or for the poor of His flock.

Hence the wisdom of appointing that the consideration of this matter be linked with "the first day of the week." It is the day that tells us of the resurrection triumph of our

Lord, and which brings before us in the Supper, the remembrance of His death and the hope of His coming again.

How fitting that in the midst of such hallowed and touching associations with the love of God freshly poured into our hearts, we should consider in His presence the relative importance of every claim and lay by first for the Lord that portion which is due to Him.

Consider, then, the need of the poor ones who are passing through trial—the sick, the unemployed, the widow and the orphan, and those servants of the Lord who for His Name's sake have gone forth to herald the Gospel, taking nothing from the world, but looking to the Lord alone to supply their needs.

Under the law a Jew was bound to give a tenth of all his increase. That is two shillings out of every pound he earned. But the Lord in this dispensation makes no *demand*. It is set before us rather in the way of *privilege* than responsibility. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." He would rather have a little given cheerfully than a larger amount given with a grudge.

Those know little of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who esteem it not a privilege to give. "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good; that he may have to give to him that needeth."

This is the highest end of successful labour, not that he may have to lavish on self, but "that he may have to give."

In the words, "as God hath prospered him"—the principle of proportionate giving is clearly implied. "To whom much is given, of the same shall much be required." "A man is accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Prosperity is thus owned as coming from the Lord, and there is the added joy of yielding to Him the more. Adversity is also owned as from Him, and there is the assurance that the lesser sum is as acceptable as the larger; even as of old the turtle-doves were as acceptable as the bullock (Lev. i.).

WE *know* no more of any truth than we have experienced of that truth in our own soul.

## THE GLORY OF GOD'S SALVATION.

### II.

THE *Third* point I want you to look at is, that the blessing of the forgiveness of sins is a *blessing put into the empty hand of faith*. "When He saw their faith," &c., the faith not only of the hearers, but of the man. There were great obstacles to bringing him into the presence of Jesus, but their faith was such that all the barriers could not keep them back. God give to you and me such faith! "It is so difficult," we sometimes say; "It is so difficult," *they* might have said. Mark their faith again when they had let him down into the presence of Jesus. Not a word did they utter; no loud, anxious call from the roof reached the ears of Jesus. They said in their hearts, "The sight of him will be enough." They knew the heart of Jesus, they knew the power of Jesus, the Spirit had taught them that; so that they did not cry to Him, but just put the need before His eyes. And so Jesus looked up, and when He saw the faith of the four on the roof, and the faith of the poor shaking cripple at His feet (who no doubt had begged to be carried to Jesus, and while he was being brought, had sustained the perseverance of the four in getting him to the place of blessing), "when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." Now, I want that we should see that their faith is a most important feature in the verse. The Divine estimate of sin is the first thing; then the authority of Jesus to absolve sin, and His exercising that grace on the ground of atonement, are deeply important truths in this verse; but, in its place comes this, the Divine action of grace, *blessing bestowed on believing ones*, the great blessing put into the empty hand of faith. It shows that there must be contact, believing contact, with Christ; the fountain is full to-day, but you do not get the blessing unless you bring your vessel, great or small, to the fountain; the river of life is flowing beside you, but you must stoop down and drink; there is One who hung on the Cross, but as no Israelite was healed who refused to look at the lifted up serpent, so no sinner will be healed who refuses to look with faith on the Crucified One. O, beloved friends, trust not in the

mercy of God, apart from atonement! . . . Does God reckon any sinner to trust in His mercy who ignores Christ? . . . God's mercy is a river, and not an inundation; a river flows between banks, and surely it is competent to the God of all grace to lay down the terms on which you may have the blessing. If you ignore the truth of atonement, and act as though you could do without a dying Christ, who took the sinner's place, and died for sin; if you ignore this, and call it "a Jewish notion"; then, I say, you "judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life." It is fashionable to say, "We don't reject the atonement, we only revolt against the *Jewish* view of it"; but what true view of atonement *can* there be but a Jewish one? God speaks in times past unto the (Jewish) fathers in the (Jewish) prophets, and hath in these last days spoken to us in His Son, of whom it is testified that He was made of the seed of (Jewish) David according to the flesh. He Himself declares, "Salvation is of the Jews"; therefore, to reject a truth because it is *Jewish*, shows that the rejector is out of harmony with the mind of God. Faith, then, is the empty hand that accepts the gift: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." What room for hope after death is *there*? "Shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." God forbid that we should hold back this solemn side of God's truth; it is a mutilated gospel that conceals God's wrath. The wrath of God must visit the rejectors of the all-sufficient sacrifice; for them "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Here, again, all thought of a "larger hope" is forbidden. The empty hand of faith receives the unspeakable gift. These two things God has conjoined, the empty hand and the unspeakable gift which is put into it.

So the next and *Fourth* thing we see in this beautiful verse is, that this needy one obtained *present* and *conscious* blessing. Salvation is an instant thing. "Thy sins *are* forgiven thee," a present blessing! There are some people who say, "It is very presumptuous to pretend to know that your

sins are forgiven," but the Lord Jesus lets this man know it. Now, let me ask you, which is presumption: for a man to look up in the Lord's face, and say,—when He says, "Thy sins *are* forgiven thee,"—"I don't know, I can't be certain about that"; or, to say, "Lord, it is not after the manner of men; but Thou doest according to Thy word, and according to Thine own heart"; or, in other words, to simply accept the blessing—which is presumption? There is no presumption like the presumption of unbelief; there is no presumption like the presumption that dares to doubt when God has spoken: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee"; and the response of faith is to look straight up to God and say, "Blessed be God!" The proper response of faith to God's grace is, "Amen." Now, if we take hold of that, dear friends, how it ought to put an end to all doubt! Do you confess yourself a sinner dead in sins, without power to put a little finger to the *work* of salvation; and do you now present the empty hand of faith to *receive* God's gift, His Son, and with Him, pardon, peace, righteousness, and glory? Then God says of you, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life"; you have forgiveness of sins, and are a child of God by faith. Look, every blessing hinges just upon the reception of Christ by faith (see John iii. 16; Acts x. 43; Acts xvi. 31; Gal. iii. 26). Eternal life, forgiveness of sins, salvation, relationship to God as His dear children, all hinge upon *believing in Jesus*. God has joined the two things together, and "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," but say, "Amen." Look up to God and say, "I am saved, Thy child for ever"; then He is pleased, and says, "This is a child who knows My heart." I do not say that you cannot be saved without this happy assurance, but God is not pleased unless He sees confidence in His Word. There is all the difference between pleasant children and trying children; there are children and children; and there is this difference in believers . . . now; but, by-and-by, when we are before His presence in love, there will not be. *Now*, there are pleasant and trying children. What are trying children? Unbelieving children, who will not believe their Father's Word, or seem



not to do so. What an unreasonable thing to doubt the God that cannot lie!

One other thing I want to notice, this is not only a present salvation; but, shall I say, and don't mistake me, a *partial salvation*, not a full salvation yet, but an earnest of the full work of the Lord Jesus in relation to sin, but in itself including all. "Thy sins are forgiven thee" does not mean that from that time there is no sin in me. And here we must draw a distinction, and be very careful. Forgiveness of sins is a present, instantaneous blessing the moment we believe in Christ, but it is not the eradication of the *root* of sin. God has a time for doing everything—for forgiving, accepting, and planting in the family itself, in the circle of blessing—and that is now. The moment by faith I am linked to the Son of God, I have eternal life and forgiveness of sins; but if you think that means that He has plucked out of my being the evil root of sin, so that never from that moment will He see anything in me to grieve His heart, I say, "No." "My time is not yet fully come" He says in regard to this. The time and seasons are put into His hand, and therefore the time and season for deliverance from the presence of sin is in His own hand, and I must not anticipate what for me is future, and if I say that the time for it is come, I am committing the same mistake in another line, as those who said that the resurrection was past already. If I am without sin I have got a redeemed *body*, and the only time when the redeemed body comes is at the resurrection. The redeemed body and the resurrection are identical; you do not get it when your spirit leaves this body, then your spirit goes to be with Jesus in paradise; but you will not have a resurrection body till the resurrection morning, and therefore you are not in a body without sin. To be in a body without sin I must have a resurrection body; and if I say I am without sin, I say in effect that I have a resurrection body. There is a time and order—first, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from God's wrath; second, "Sin shall not have dominion over you"; not that sin will be extinguished in you, but not have dominion over you; it will be a traitor in the camp, but not a captain in power; that is the difference. The moment

you believe in Christ its relationship changes. He breaks the power of sin, *Christ* rules, but rules "in the midst of His enemies," mark you; but the Lord will "give grace and glory," so that the time is coming when the third full complete stage of blessing is reached, and we shall not only have forgiveness of sin and deliverance from its dominion, but deliverance from its very being. Now, all is wrapped up in "Thy sins are forgiven thee," which is the earnest and pledge of future blessing. But I have to know, as taught by the Spirit of God, the *time* God has for the accomplishment of His purposes.

Now, there is a word in this verse for us who have trusted in Christ. The Lord Jesus, after showing what *He* considered to be the *greatest* fact and question by dealing with the man's sins, then heals his *body*. Now, there is time and order here; but the order shows the comparative importance of the two things: He delivers from sin *first*, and heals the man's body afterwards. But now, having done the *greater*, what was it for Him to do the *lesser*? "Rise up and walk." What is that but a most beautiful illustration of Rom. viii. 32: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us *all* things?" Has He forgiven you your sins; then what will He not bestow? If we want a little more health, more success in service, more prosperity in business, more wisdom in the management of the family; if we want a little more in this or that thing in our pilgrimage down here, shall we doubt the power and willingness of the Father to give them, after He has given His Son, and delivered Him up to die in our stead? and shall we doubt the power and ability of the One at the right hand of God to help us in every possible emergency? O, beloved, let us reason as the apostle reasons in that chapter: "Shall He not with Him also freely give us *all* things."

Beloved friends, who up to this hour have been without Christ, don't you see what a blessed portion we have who believe in Christ,—our sins are forgiven? There is no cloud in our heaven, we can look up with not a cloud between our hearts and God; all are done away by the blood of His Son, and we look

up into the face of a satisfied God. If He take us away in the night, if we lie down never to wake up, what is it? To depart and be with Christ, which is very far better. And, beloved friends, this may be your portion *now*. Mark you, forgiveness of sins is an instant blessing, and if any of you have not closed with the offer of salvation, I plead with you to do so now.

Forgiveness is the pledge of all the other blessings: you can't have that without having the others, for they follow in Divine course; and as the foremost in the train reaches you in the words of absolution from the lips of the risen Christ, you have the pledge that all others will reach you in God's good time.

J. W.

### THE HOLINESS AND SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

THE saint's growth in grace springs from a good understanding of those things which are freely given unto us of our God, for our comfort and edification; for God's truth is all plain to him that has understanding.

And, indeed, if we have not got pure and right thoughts of Christ, we can never have true and blessed communion with the Father and the Son; for to have joy in communion with them, every child of God must see the holiness, and purity, and spotlessness of Jesus, and that not only at one certain period. From everlasting He was the delight of His Father (Prov. viii. 30); for the Father and the Son were workers together from all eternity, so that he who looks upon Christ looks upon God; and he who looks upon the saint looks upon Christ, "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." "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." Though He took upon Him our nature, He still dwelt in the bosom of the Father; He was the only One in whom God could say He was "well pleased." Jesus

became in all things as we are; that is, He was in the same trying places as we are at times; and He was tempted in all points as we are, "yet without sin."

We are *not* without sin, for we wrestle with that which Jesus never knew; that is, "a heart deceitful and desperately wicked," and "an evil heart of unbelief." It is true that Jesus knew that there was such a heart in man, for as the Word of God, He was a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; but He never knew it in Himself; for He was holy both in body, soul, and spirit; and He had power "in Himself," for He was "God manifest in the flesh": as we read, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6-8.) Though Jesus had power in Himself, He depended upon God also; His life, up to the cross, was one of unbroken communion with His Father, for He could do nothing without His Father; as He said Himself, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father"; and again, we read in Isa. l. 4, 5: "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. Christ never knew a will of His own, for He ever counted it His meat to do the will of His Father, and to finish His work. We find only in Jesus the holy and truly obedient One; the only One who did at all times set the Lord before Him. He sought not His own honour, for He did not speak of Himself, but of the Father that sent Him. Thus, whilst we are tracing the path of Jesus, we can truly see in Him the one blessed Man: He was always shining as "the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person"; though He was still "the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief."

But now let us look a little at that part of the Lord's life from whence all our hope and comfort springs, even the cross. Because the spotless life of obedience which He lived would have been of no benefit to us without His death: "For without shedding of blood is no remission of sins." Jesus could have gone out of the world by Himself without suffering, for He had no sin in Himself; but His Church could not have gone out with Him; she would have been as far from God as ever, if He had not shed the precious blood that brought her nigh. All who know the Lord know that if He had not been perfect He could not have offered Himself to be acceptable to God; but He *was* perfect. And, mark this—He offers Himself up willingly for the sins of His people; but it is not till He comes to the cross that we see Him "the Sin-bearer." Only there that promise is fulfilled which was given to Adam in Gen. iii. 15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." For when Jesus was walking as the Man of Sorrows, He was meek and lowly; He did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. The sorrows of Jesus when "walking about doing good," and His agony in the garden, are two different things. In the first place, He is sorrowing for the darkness around Him, and because they would not receive the things that belonged to their peace; but in the garden He is still in communion with His Father, and it is this that His soul is overwhelmed with, the thought of going out of the presence of God, for He had never been out of that presence, nor did He ever lose the presence of His Father till He came to the cross. *We do not feel it so much, because we do not know the value of a present God in the time of trouble (or at any time) as the Master did.*

It is "the cup" that He prays about, which was the judgment of our sins. He knew well that if He took them upon Himself, God must hide His face from Him, and forsake Him; for "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity": no one can stand in the presence of God with sin; no, not even His only begotten Son, in whom His soul delighted. Oh, let us ever keep in remembrance that it

was for *our* sins Jesus suffered and endured the wrath of God!

It is at the cross we see the enormity of sin; that it should cause the all-wise God to sacrifice His only begotten Son, and pour all His wrath upon His head, for "all the billows" went over Jesus. Oh, brethren, is there any living soul that can tell the depth of those words of Jesus on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark! He felt being out of the presence of God more than He felt His bodily sufferings. And, once more, let us, brethren, ever keep in mind that this was all for His Church. He could have gone out free, as He told Peter in the garden, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" or, in other words, "How shall I have the bride of My heart with Me?" for she was in bondage under the law, and there was none so near of kin as He is; therefore the right of redemption belonged unto Him. Thus we see that "it behoved Christ to suffer, and to enter into His glory," *with* His Church, for which He so willingly shed His precious blood, which alone set her free from the hands of justice. Truly, the holy walk and life of Jesus was very blessed; but the cross makes it more blessed; and His resurrection crowns the whole. So we see, also, that He was a perfect *Man*, as well as perfect *God*; for if He had not been a perfect Man His body could not have been an acceptable offering for sin in the sight of God, for God is holy, and what is offered to Him must be holy. And if Jesus had not been perfect God ("manifest in the flesh") He could not have *laid down* His life for us, and have *taken it* again; neither could He have done the wonders He did, for "never *man* spake as *He* spake." May we, beloved in the Lord, enter into a closer fellowship with the sufferings of our blessed Lord; then we shall truly know more of "the power of His resurrection."

Sweet our Saviour's path to trace,  
To learn His wondrous love and grace;  
See how He loved and pitied us,  
And left the happy realms of bliss,  
To pour out His most precious blood,  
To reconcile us thus to God.

C. T.

## RESTORATION OF SOUL.

IT is of the highest importance that we who are the Lord's people should walk individually in the light of heaven. There are many reasons that make this imperative.

1. If I am not walking in the light, I can run no messages for God. I can do no work for Him: for fellowship comes before service; and if the Lord has not got our hearts, He does not want our feet to run His errands, or our hands to labour in His vineyard. I am thus cut off from having part or lot in the affairs of God's kingdom, until I repent and come again to the Lord. I may go through a great round of works; but, if in heart I am away from God, these works shall be nothing better than dead sacrifices.

2. If not walking in the light, I am not giving light to them that sit in darkness. Water cannot rise above its level; and neither can I be the means of lifting others to a higher platform than I occupy myself. This should cause great searchings of heart. When a business house of any great size becomes bankrupt, it generally happens that a great number of smaller concerns are involved in the ruin. So is it with me if I walk not in the light; I will drag others down with me. Our life, for good or ill, is having its effect on all around us, in spite of ourselves. How all-important, then, that my life should be a savour of Christ!

3. If I walk not in the light, I am, by my example, leading God's people away from Him. A young brother meets me, but the subject of conversation is not "the things that touch the King." I discuss the plans of the Government, local news, and the like; but He who is Governor among the nations is never mentioned! The young brother has not been helped a single iota in his heavenward journey. I have sent him away buried in the atmosphere of politics and local news, very likely to follow up these lines to the neglect of his Bible and communion with God. I am thus only a hinderer in the things of God, so long as I remain away from Him. Surely this should constrain me to turn again to the Lord.

4. Time spent out of communion with God is not spent but wasted. It is worse than a mere blank. Can I afford thus to live?

Does not enlightened conscience rise in rebellion and say, "It must not be"? Is not every living follower of Christ a testimony against me? Is there not an eloquence in the mute voice of those who look to me for an example which they do not see? Does not the Bible, lying there on the table, bear witness that I am a stranger to the holy place? Does not the heavenly conversation of that godly brother cut me to the heart? Am I not out of humour with myself and with everything? Yes; I may be compared to Pharaoh's chariots, which drove heavily when the Lord took off the wheels. It is hard to work to keep up a profession where there is departure in soul from God. Therefore I must turn to Him, and *I must turn now.*

G. H.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO  
WITH YOUR TALENT?

SOME Christians seem to play at Christianity: they act as if Christ came into the world to save them from all further care about their souls, and set them free to enjoy themselves. They go in and out of our assemblies, and frisk about as if the whole business was a very nice amusement. They enjoy a spirited meeting, and admire a great address; but as to bending their necks to the yoke of Christ, they have never tried it, and never will. They are the rabbits of the church. The oxen are ploughing the fields, and the rabbits are hiding in the burrows, or sporting in the grass. Ask these brethren to do something or give something. Off they go. To whisper the word *service* is to alarm them.

Brother, does this cap fit you? If so, change your way of life immediately. It is a poor thing to be trifling while others are toiling. It is dishonourable to yourself, injurious to the Gospel work, and ungrateful to your Saviour, to be wasting time and opportunity. The consequences of wasting one hour of time it would not be possible to foresee. A moment may be the hinge of eternity to those around you. O brother, there is much to be done. UP AND AT IT!

THEY that have *weak* faith shall have more, and they that have *any* have eternal life.

## STANDING BY THE CROSS.

## "YET A LITTLE WHILE."

"These things therefore the soldiers did. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene" (John xix. 23-25).

WHEN discord and distrust divide  
The saints whom God in grace united ;  
When bitter jealousies and pride  
The fellowship of hearts has blighted.  
Not for *the Name* they suffer loss,  
Or foe had ne'er their witness shattered ;  
Had they but stood by Jesus' cross,  
No pride or strife the flock had scattered.

Thus Galilean women stood,  
And in His presence, broken-hearted,  
Beheld the strife of soldiers rude,  
Who 'mong themselves His garments parted.  
But nought of self their minds engaged,  
To Him, their suffering Lord attracted,  
They gathered there while Satan raged,  
In bond of holiest love compacted.

Thus gathered saints in weakness stand,  
While one desire each soul possesseth ;  
To human eyes a helpless band,  
Such helpless ones Jehovah blesseth.  
With grateful praise each heart is filled,  
As from one mouth the note is given,  
By which the enemy is stilled,  
And God is glorified in heaven.

When 'mong the flock at Corinth came  
The plague of envious contention,  
Before the apostle turned to blame  
Those who had wrought the sad dissension,  
He brought before the minds of all  
The cross of Christ, His grace unfolding,  
That each before that cross might fall ;  
No place for pride while Him beholding.

Lord, keep us standing by the cross,  
With chastened hearts and spirits broken,  
Till things of earth become as dross,  
And words of strife no more are spoken.  
Then in one place together found,  
We'll celebrate the Gospel's story,  
And with one mouth the praises sound  
Of Him who fills eternal glory. A. L.

"Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37).

THESE words, beloved, are only sweet to those who are longing to see Jesus' lovely face. It is when the eyes are dim with weeping, and the heart is sad because of trials by the way, that these precious words come with power to our souls. "Yet a little while"—yea, beloved, it is the only hope we have left now of ever enjoying true happiness. Brethren have failed ; the Church has become a ruined, shattered thing in itself ; but, yet a very little while and the restorer of all things shall come—"And we know that when He doth appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Our eyes shall behold for themselves and not another. And every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. It is this precious truth that purges our thoughts and hearts, that yet a little while and all shall be over ; for these eyes that are now so often dimmed with *weeping* shall then behold His glorious face and be a partaker with Him in *His glory*. And, beloved, we shall enjoy *eternal* peace. To you, therefore, beloved brethren, who are bowed down because of sorrow, is this promise sent, that ye might lift up your heads in hope of His appearing.

Some may be weeping because of departed friends ; but, beloved, "them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 14). Yes, we shall meet them all in One ! It is, indeed, a comfort now to know that they are gone to be with Jesus ; but oh, what joy it gives to the soul to know that when He doth appear they will appear with Him. Gird up the loins of your mind, therefore, and hope to the end—"For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

"A little while"—He'll come again,—  
Let us the precious hours redeem,—  
Our only grief to give Him pain,  
Our joy to serve and follow Him ;  
Watching and ready may we be,  
As those that long their Lord to see.

## Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following :—

What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for *introducing* those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them?

Is it scriptural to call "the Lord's Table" "the Father's Table"?

Does Eph. v. 4 imply that there are certain "foolish talkings" and "jestings" which are convenient, or does it mean that *none* of these things are convenient or befitting?

What constitutes a type in Scripture; or, what may be *legitimately* designated a type?

If the parables of Matt. xiii. have *all* reference to the present dispensation, how do such passages as "Gather up *first* the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them," and "The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just," harmonise with 1 Thess. iv., the removal of the saints from amongst the wicked to meet the Lord in the air?

Could any reader explain the meaning of 1 John iv. 17, last clause, "Because as He is, so are we in this world"?

### WHO WERE THE NICOLAITANES?

**QUESTION 344.**—Who and what were the Nicolaitanes; and to whom does the term refer in the prophetic aspect of the seven epistles to the churches of Asia?

**Ans. A.**—The Nicolaitanes referred to by our Lord were, according to many early writers, a gnostic sect, given to immoral practices. Irenaeus says, founded by the Nicolas of Acts vi. 1-7; Hippolytus, that they taught the resurrection was the change wrought at baptism. The Ephesian church had lost something of its first love, but the power of the name was still there—they could not bear evil men; and such were the Nicolaitanes, who, acting upon a false interpretation of Matt. xxii. 30, pretending to be only spiritual, had no sense of shame or morality. The warning to Pergamos is very different: their home being where Satan's seat was, exposed them to persecution and false teaching. The great temple of Æsculapius (Satan's seat) was there, of whom Lactantius says, "The Æsculapian serpent was the express symbol of Satan" (Rev. xii. 9). Balaam led Israel to worship the same false god under another name—Baal Peor, "the Lord of the open mouth"

(Rev. ii. 24). There was much in this worship to draw away unstable souls anxious to penetrate into things not revealed, and go beyond "It is written." We need the warnings now, for these teachings are still abroad. Occult science, revived Buddhism, *faith healing* as taught by some, are the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. While I judge the addresses are consecutively prophetic, still we must ever keep before our minds the churches were contemporary. Such being the case, while one phase may be more prominent at one time than another, still all did and do exist together. J. C.

**Ans. B.**—Their title means "the conquerors, over-comers, or victors over the people"; and, as it is admitted by the ablest and most candid of scholars that there never was a sect of this name, we must conclude that the Nicolaitanes were an order of men such as was predicted by the apostle Paul in Acts xx., even the order now known as the clergy. For this order of men has come in between God and His people, crushing out and crushing down the latter, and keeping them in spiritual bondage and ignorance for the sake of power and gain. In the church of Rome the victory of the clergy over the laity is complete. In the various offshoots from that church the victory, though similar in character, is not quite so crushing; but as the various sects grow older, the laity grow feebler and the clergy stronger, and in the course of time the people become as much downtrodden in the smallest denomination as in the largest, although they may not think so, and they begin to lean upon their clergy instead of upon their God. No wonder the Lord hates Nicolaitanism! R. L. S.

**Ans. C.**—Evidently the works of the Nicolaitanes are the opposite to the works of those who do not let go their first love, and of those who, having let it go, repent and do the first works. These "first works" are works of love—of disciples, indeed—drawing all hearts to the Lord and one another, and thus known of all to be His disciples, and the lamp-stand of this love will be maintained thus brightly burning to the glory of God, so that men will see their good works and glorify their *Father* who is in heaven.

The word "Father" implies a happy family gathering, where brotherly love continues and brethren dwell together in unity. Thus all teaching, however really or apparently scriptural, if not God-given and God-breathed through the teacher, must grieve the Spirit, hinder His work, deny the name of Jesus, do the very opposite to the ministry of Christ, and result in scattering the sheep and doing the works of the Nicolaitanes. From this practical point of view it will be seen how fearfully this Nicolaitane evil has spread to-day in the meetings of the saints. As it was found 2000 years ago, and that in a church of saints who had but recently let go their first love, no marvel that it should be found everywhere to-day. M. T. B.

**Editor's Note.**—The fact that there is no reference elsewhere in Scripture to the sect of the Nicolaitanes; that, to say the least, there is no proof in secular history of the existence of such a sect, and no definite or reliable

information as to the nature of their doctrines or practices, together with the allegoric character of the context and of the whole book of Revelation; for example, the references to Balaam and Jezebel, all lead to the conclusion that the real meaning must be sought for elsewhere.

Such a twice-repeated urgent censure *must* point to some vast, definite evil which the Lord saw to be already at work among the churches, some evil that was to issue in the most serious consequences, and not to the teachings of some obscure sect which was soon to be extinct and forgotten.

We have not the slightest doubt that the solution is as given in answer B.

Any attempt at a practical application of the teaching of these texts, based upon other interpretations, seems to us to lack point and definiteness.

The difficulty with many in accepting this view lies in the mistaken idea that it necessarily brings into terrible condemnation the many known godly and gifted men who are to be found in the ranks of the clergy of various denominations.

But the character of the Book is essentially this—that it gives the Lord's judgment not of persons, but of principles; and in judging principles He looks at them not in the bud but in the fruit, and so do all who are taught by the Spirit. A principle may have a very small, plausible, and apparently harmless beginning, but one who is taught of God may perceive that its issues will be confusion and disaster, and, consequently, whilst the inexperienced may see no harm in it, the spiritual one will *hate* it.

It is of the essence of spirituality not only to love all that Christ loves, but also in fellowship with Him to hate all that He hates.

He who esteems the Divine precepts in all things to be right will hate every false way. See Ps. cxix. 128.

To judge of the clerical position as a principle it is necessary to divest the mind of all thought of persons, good or bad, and see what the *principle* has led to. Fully developed, it issues inevitably in priestcraft and popery. The attraction by which all the sects of Christendom drift into conformity with Romish ideas and practices, has been aptly called "the various concentric circles of the great Babylonish whirlpool." Even godly evangelical "churchmen," who protest against "ritualistic practices," are little aware that they, by adopting the Romish title of "Rev.," the characteristic style of dress, the type of ecclesiastical edifice, the celebration of Christmas and other *mass* days, are far advanced on the concentric current of the whirlpool.

The gravity of the error lies, not in circumstantialities such as we have alluded to, but in the fact that as a principle it substitutes the ministrations of a human order, called qualified salaried by the will of man, for that ministry which is the gift of Christ and of the operation of the Spirit of God.

Satan has thus succeeded in attacking the very vitals of Christianity by cutting off the church, so far as it was possible to do so, from the source and channel of all Divine edification, making it dependent upon men and means rather than upon the Head at God's right hand.

It is for those who have learned the mind of the Lord as to this unscriptural distinction of "clergy and

laity," to *hate*, not the persons, but the principle; to hate every form of doctrine or teaching that would tend thereto, and every deed or practice that savours of the error.

#### "THE NEED" OF THE LORD'S SERVANTS: HOW ASCERTAINED.

**QUESTION 345.**—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?

**Ans. A.**—This is one of the many self-imposed perplexities that we find amongst Christian people. Why ask "Is it *scriptural*" to be thoughtful and kind to the *Lord's* servants, or indeed to any one of "the household of faith"? Why ask, "Should the Lord's servant answer" the question—Are you in need? Many of them are in need. Why should he not answer? How is the need of "*the Lord's servant*" to be known, unless made known voluntarily, or by answering a kind and brotherly inquiry? Read 1 Cor. ix. 14; 3 John 6, 7.

Surely this is a sufficiently scriptural reason for what is done by Christians "in some places," and about which a question is raised. L. D. G.

**Ans. B.**—As a broad principle it is not scriptural, nor is it the path of faith to do so on either side. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" (Rom. xiv. 4); and on the same principle it might be asked, "Who art thou that inquirest at another man's servant as to his need?" That is his own master's prerogative. As a "rule," no Christian in fellowship with God would ever ask such a question; and no "labourer" who is on right terms with Him who called him would answer such a question. Still, circumstances may arise where a godly man might in a fatherly, or a true brotherly spirit, inquire at a servant of Christ's as to his temporal circumstances, and where it would be no dishonour to the Lord, nor degrading to His service, for one to answer with frankness. Were Christians and churches in the condition in which they ought to be, the true servant of the Lord would not need to maintain the reserve, which he has often to do, owing to the coldness and worldliness of those whom he is seeking to help. If the saints are in fellowship with the Lord Himself, they would not need to ask His servant as to his need; and while the serving one needs to be careful not to be allured from the path of faith, yet he needs to watch lest his reserve should be the fruit of *pride* instead of true dependence on the living God. If we compare 2 Cor. xi. 8-10 with Eph. vi. 21, 22, and Col. iv. 7, we will see how differently Paul treated different churches according to their *condition*.

Much grace is needed now for the Lord's servant to combine true dignity with genuine humility; and clear discernment is needed to know where mutual confidence would be pleasing to the Lord, and where it is necessary to maintain the strictest silence as to how the Lord is supplying his need. G. A.

**Ans. C.**—If “God loveth a cheerful giver,” then to give grudgingly and only after one has found out by the unseemly process of catechising that the servant of the Lord is in actual need, cannot be pleasing to God.

“The labourer is worthy of his hire,” and those to whom he ministers should feel themselves bound to recompense him as liberally as possible, leaving him to dispose of what he receives in whatever way he may think fit, being himself also God’s steward in the matter.

Sometimes, however, through want of instruction in these matters, questions are asked of the Lord’s servant, and in such cases it must be left to his own discretion to give or withhold an answer.

R. L. S.

**Ans. D.**—A Christian in an assembly who should ask another, whom he counts as a servant of the Lord, if he is in need, “with the view of ministering to his need,” is manifestly a servant of the Lord himself (or herself), and worthy of all honour, as such. Even the most elementary of scriptures on the point (Luke vi. 31) more than warrants it: and grace cannot but answer to grace.

G. W. C.

**Editor’s Note.**—Both those who “give” and those who “receive” have need to be on their guard against the affectation of faith and Divine guidance.

There are some servants of God who so value the daily provision ministered to them as evidence of the unflinching instant care of their Father in heaven, that they would not for the world make known their need in human ear, lest by any means that which is sent should appear to come less directly from God and less manifestly as the expression of His loving care.

Such, for reasons well-pleasing to God, would probably not reply to a direct inquiry as to their need—unless it was to say, “I have all and abound.”

Others, with the affectation of similar faith, would disdain to reply and feel hurt at the inquiry, but would probably in a round-about way give hints which could not fail to be intelligible to those who are exercised about such matters.

The thing to be desired is reality. Characters differ, circumstances differ, and the ways of God in His providence differ widely according to His wisdom. Even a prophet had once to ask a poor widow to supply his need. Therefore, to lay down rules is not prudent.

But as to asking a servant of God if he is in need, we judge it to be an ungainly way of arriving at the desired information. If it is in the heart to give, give. If done to the Lord, it will be accepted of Him. If the Lord’s servant is in need, it will yield thanks to God for the gift, and elicit also thanks on behalf of the giver for the grace of God in him, and prayer for him as the Lord’s steward.

If at the time he be not in need, it may yield to him the more blessed part of being himself a giver to some whose need he knows; or else it may be a timely provision against some impending necessity which God only can foresee.

We see no reason, however, why all available sources of information should not be taken advantage of for finding out where need is greatest, and where gifts would be bestowed most to God’s glory. But this can be done in a considerate and delicate way, so as not to

hurt the most sensitive, as well as more effectively, than in such a way as to occasion pain and perplexity.

Seeking guidance of the Lord as to who should be communicated with, does not preclude the obtaining of general information and being more or less influenced thereby.

#### HOW MANY TIMES A WEEK CAN WE “BREAK BREAD”?

**QUESTION 346.**—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”?

**Ans. A.**—The text of Scripture being inspired, the silence of Scripture, we may conclude, is divinely purposed. Why, then, is the Word of God silent about the days on which the “breaking of bread” may or may not take place? We infer from 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26, that there should be no restriction as to times; but we also infer, from verses 20, 33, that there should be a gathering together for this purpose (that is, of all the believers able to come to it), and that this would be best and most suitably done on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7), and that it was so “set in order” by “the apostles.” We have no law in this matter but the law of love and of a sound mind, and we do well to promote the assembling of ourselves thus together in the most godly, devout, and edifying way possible; and to avoid any flighty “celebrations” apart from the general body of believers.

G. C.

**Ans. B.**—The Lord instituted the breaking of bread not on the first day of the week. The instances of the breaking of bread given in Scripture, after the Lord’s death, appear to have been on the first day. 1 Cor. xi. 26—“As often as,” does not limit it to any one day.

O. B.

**Ans. C.**—This is a question upon which conventional thoughts and phraseology are likely to mislead. There are only two places where the subject, that is, “the first of the week,” is mentioned. The first is Acts xx. 7, “And upon the first (day) of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.” Here is stated the object, or purpose, for which they “came together—to break bread.” The second place is 1 Cor. xvi. 2: “Upon the first (day) of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” Here it is implied that the “first of the week” was the recognised day for “coming together.” 1 Cor. xi. 17 to 34 is teaching corrective of disorder and laxity that had prevailed when they had “come together.” And this is all the teaching that we have about “the first of the week,” from which I conclude that the recognition of “the first of the week” being absolute, we are not at liberty to use any other occasion.

L. D. G.

[For the Editor’s thoughts upon this subject we refer our readers to our issue for February, 1888, where the question is gone into fully.—Ed.]



## ON BACKSLIDING.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

(Portion read, Hosea ii. 5-23).

**I**SRRAEL had backsliden and sinned against God, and we know from Romans xv. 4, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning" (see also 1 Cor. x. 11, and 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Backsliding, as represented in the Scriptures, is not altogether what we should suppose—a slipping back. Literally it means the withdrawing, or pulling away, of the shoulder, which generally involves breaking and injury to the skin of the animal. Hence such words as, "I will *heal* their backsliding."

Backsliding begins in the heart, and there is a solemn word in Prov. xiv. 14, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." That is to say, God will let him go on taking his own way, until he finds the bitterness of it, and in contrition of spirit acknowledges his sin.

The Scripture read refers to a people who were once bright and happy. See Jeremiah ii. 2: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

In Prov. xxiii. 26, God says, "My son, give Me thine heart." God wants hearts loyal to Him; hearts finding joy and satisfaction in Himself alone, realising from day to day that all our well-springs are in the living God. God led His people into a barren, waste, howling wilderness, where food and water were scarce, surrounded by wicked men and wild beasts. He brought them into these circumstances that they might practically know Him as their Protector, Provider, and Guide; that they might look to Him alone in all circumstances. Some time ago I read the following words, which were printed on a card:—

"Lord Jesus! make Thyself to me  
A living, bright, reality;  
More present to faith's vision keen  
Than any outward object seen;  
More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than even the sweetest earthly tie."

That is the summit of Christian perfection. Beloved, that is what God wants to lead us

into. Such shall be the fulness of our joy and blessing in eternity. Christ will be all in all to every ransomed one.

We see from this passage in Hosea that when circumstances were well with them, when they had plenty of corn, oil, wine, silver, and gold, instead of acknowledging God as the bountiful Giver of these blessings, they were tracing them to another source. This is what often happens with ourselves. It may be that insensibly to ourselves our hearts are delighting in the blessings of God, but not in God Himself. We see the channel through which God communicates them to us; we glory in them, but fail to discern and thankfully acknowledge the source from whence these blessings come. It may be that things are going on well in the family, and none of the children are ill; or that there are no troubles or difficulties in the assembly. Our business is prospering, and we are carried along in the current of prosperity. We are taken up with the blessings, whilst the great and gracious Giver of them all is forgotten. Instead of our thanksgiving going up to God, and we being humbled under a deep sense of our indebtedness to the gracious, loving hand that bestows these favours, we become puffed up and self-satisfied. Beloved, let us ever remember that every good and perfect gift cometh from above; that all our blessings reach us from the bountiful hand of our heavenly Father. His hand dispenses them to us as really as He sent manna day by day to Israel in the wilderness.

Jehovah sent bread from heaven every morning that they might not forget the hand that fed them, and that they might always look up with grateful heart to the great and good God who was caring for them continually.

It does not matter whether we have just enough to meet our need for a single day, or week, or month, or year, we ought to have a constant sense of our dependence on our heavenly Father.

Let us ever remember that all blessing comes to us direct from the living God, and that there ought to be continually ascending from our hearts a stream of thanksgiving to the God of all grace.

Jehovah says concerning His people, verse 8: "She did not know that I gave her her corn,

and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold." She thought it was her lovers who were giving them to her, while all the time it was God, and so He deals with them about this. He says, verse 6: "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths."

God never hedges up His way, but He hedges up OUR way. How many have gone on in their own way until they could go no further, and have been brought to a standstill, and led to consider their ways. When God has been dealing with us, and hindering us from getting our desire, we may have said in our hearts, "All these things are against me," whilst God was dealing with us in love, in order to lead us back to Himself.

God often deals with a household on account of disobedience. He visits it in love with sickness. It may be that the head of the family loses his situation, and by-and-by they are brought into straits. They find that they cannot get on further. God is hedging up their way. What is the root of it all? That we might "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Micah vi. 9). When God uses the rod, it is that He might get us to listen to Him that appointed it.

The Lord, as it were, says here: "I have not been getting thanks; all My kindness is failing to draw their hearts to Me. I will take it all away." Does He do that because He does not love them? Nay, it is a yearning heart longing for love that is doing this. He yearns in love over us, desiring above all else the affection of our hearts.

He is about to take away these blessings from her because she is not acknowledging Him as the Giver. 10th verse: "I will discover her lewdness." God will not allow her to cloak her sin. He knows that this is necessary before there can be real restoration. God will put His finger on the covered-up sin, that it may be judged and put away. Just as in the case of Achan, who, when he saw the "goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver and the wedge of gold," coveted them and took them, and thinking that no eye saw him, he hid them in the earth in the midst of his tent. But God dragged it to the light and judged it.

Verse 11: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease," &c. The outward profession and religious activity which was kept up to cloak the iniquity of the heart that had departed from the living God; He says, "I will tear it all away, I will not have it."

It is sometimes a good thing for people when they realise that all their profession and outward zeal for the Lord is such a sham that they give it up. See what follows: "I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the Lord. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her" (verses 13, 14). There was no use speaking comfortably to her when she was occupied with other lovers, while she was going on in her own ways and path. In Isaiah xl. 1, 2, the Lord says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." Why? For "she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sin." Comfort comes like rain upon the mown grass, upon the grass that has been cut down. That's when the word of the Lord brings comfort. The heart needs to be prepared for the comfort. The Lord is indeed good to those who have a broken and a contrite heart.

"And I will give her vineyards from thence" (verse 15). Vineyards from a wilderness? Yes, vineyards from a wilderness, for the source is not in the soil of earth but in the heart of Jehovah. I will give her vineyards from the place of barrenness. Then shall she begin to be fruitful when she has experienced that all around her is a wilderness. That's where fruitfulness begins.

"And the valley of Achor for a door of hope." What is the valley of Achor? The valley where they stoned Achan to death and burnt all that he hid with fire. The valley where every man of Israel came forward with a stone to fling at the man that was cursed. That place where all Israel wept with broken hearts before Jehovah. That place where communion with an offended God had been restored. "I will give her that place of weeping, that place of judgment upon sin; that place where her heart was broken and poured out before the Lord, I will give her

that for a door of hope." That is the way the blessing comes, and if we are not brought down to that condition of soul we are not ready for the blessing yet. If we meet the trial with stout hearts, instead of broken and contrite hearts, we are not in a state of soul to receive the blessing.

If in the assembly we are not dealing with sin in one another, with broken, humbled, chastened spirits, we shall not be used in blessing to those we seek to deal with. If we are seeking to carry out the judgment of God upon others, and at the same time not judging ourselves, we will be unblest in our professed service to the Lord. Unless we humble ourselves before the Lord we shall by-and-by bring down upon ourselves His judgment.

Take the case of David, who went down to Achish at Gath and dwelt among the Philistines, and there got himself into such trouble, even to feigning himself mad. That is the time referred to in Ps. xxxiv. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Read this Psalm and see how the man that brought himself into such troubles by his own disobedience, when he cried, found perfect help in the faithful God. What do we find in Ps. cvii.? It is God bringing men down into deep trouble, till they are at their wits' end in order that they might be led to put their trust in Him, and acknowledge their dependence upon God alone. It is when all human help, strength, and energy is gone, that God comes in and undertakes for the one that puts his trust in Him.

"And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of Egypt" (verse 15). In the valley of weeping she shall sing. What a different kind of joy from that referred to in verse 11. It is the singing of a heart in fellowship with Jehovah. She shall sing as she sung on the banks of the Red Sea with Egypt behind her and her enemies under the waves of God's judgment.

"And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi," that is "My husband," which casts all responsibility to provide, care, protect, nourish, and love on Him. What is the responsibility that is put upon the wife? Just to be subject. God

puts all the burden upon the head of the house—all the responsibility. And the wife comes into all the blessing by being subject. This is what the Lord Jesus wants us to learn.

She shall ask Jehovah, her husband, to deliver her from the many entanglements of the many lovers that she had been ensnared by, and she shall be brought back to know her eternal and unchangeable Lover.

Verse 18: "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven . . . I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." Now He comes in in power, now He can give blessing that He could not give before. It would only have puffed up her proud and hardened heart. Now He gets thanks and praise, and He can freely bless.

Verse 19. Beloved friends, that is the end of it, "they shall know the Lord." In Phil. iii. the apostle Paul says, "that I might know Him." God has set before us a living Person, and all His dealings with us are in order to make that blessed One a bright reality to our souls, that we may walk in fellowship with Him.

---

### THE WORD OF LIFE: Its Relation to the Believer.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

"*THE WORD OF LIFE*" (1 John i. 3).  
"*The Word of Life*" (Phil. ii. 16).

**F**EW, perhaps, out of the many of our readers who have reverently read and diligently searched the Scriptures, will have failed to notice the analogy existing between many of the titles, attributes, and actions belonging to Christ and those ascribed to the Word of God.

That the parallelism which exists between the Living and the written Word is of the closest kind, a few illustrations out of many which might be given will clearly show.

The correspondence between the titles of Christ and the Word is most marked. For example, He is "The Word," "The Word of God," and "The Word of Life"; and the very same epithets are bestowed upon the

Scriptures. The same relation is also seen when we look at some of the attributes of the Lord Jesus. He is "Holy," "Good," and "Eternal"; even so is the Word—the whole Word—relatively, operatively, and intrinsically. Again, if we examine the actions of Christ upon men, and then trace the operations of the Word, we find the lines of analogy running yet closer to each other, revealing a mysterious union between the two, a union which, when once seen, must deeply impress the thoughtful mind with the Divine origin of the holy Scriptures. Does He cleanse the guilty, quicken the dead, and save the lost? So does the Word of God, though not in the sense in which He does. Does He instruct, sanctify, keep, guide, establish, and control the believer? So does the Word of truth; but instrumentally, of course. There is not one of the operations alluded to, and the list might be greatly extended, which is performed by the Lord Jesus, that is not in an instrumental sense predicated of the Word. Close, indeed, as we see, is the correspondence between Christ and the Scriptures.

The written Word, "the Word of Life," being our theme, we shall examine it in the following order:—

- I. To explain in what sense it CONTAINS LIFE.
- II. To show in what manner it CONVEYS LIFE.
- III. To point out how it CONTRIBUTES TO THE GROWTH OF LIFE.
- IV. To exhibit its CONTROL OVER LIFE.
- V. To indicate its action in CONSECRATING LIFE.
- VI. To describe the way in which it CLEANSSES LIFE.

#### I. To explain in what sense it CONTAINS life.

Revelation as a complete whole, and the gospel aspect of it in an especial sense, is "the word of life," and it contains life. This is unmistakably plain from the words of our blessed Lord, when arraigned before the council at Jerusalem on the twofold charge of violating the Sabbath and making Himself equal with God. "Search the Scriptures," said He, "for in them ye think ye have *eternal life*: and they are they which testify of *Me*." And what He thus claimed for the Old Testament Scriptures He also claimed for His own sayings:—"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are *life*," a truth which Peter echoed and emphasised when he said, "Thou hast the words of *eternal life*." Now, in what sense the word

contains life we will endeavour briefly to show. We need hardly say that it does not enfold life in the way that He, the Living Word, does; or that it at all possesses inherent, essential life. This it does not, neither can it of itself effectually communicate life to the dead: this it cannot do, or, to all who have ever or will ever read it, it must convey life. Life does not dwell in it as an entity, yet it is the "Word of Life." It enfolds life in this sense, that it is an infallible revelation from the *Living Father* of His being, existence, character, and attributes. All that men have ever known, or can possibly know, of God on earth is to be found in it. He is in the Word, therefore life is there. It is also an unveiling of Him who is the "Word of Life" (1 John i. 3), of Him upon whom all other life, physical, spiritual, and eternal, depends, for He is the *Author of Life* (Acts iii. 15, R.V.), and is to be found therein. It contains a complete revelation of the Spirit of Life, a revelation of His divinity, power, offices, gifts, activities, and fruit. He is the agent of life, and is most fully made known in the Scriptures. In it we find delineated for us all that we need to know of the principle, power, and properties of life, spiritual and eternal. Much of the New Testament portion is taken up with the proclamation of life to those who are alienated from the life of God—morally and spiritually dead, and in danger of dying eternally. And just as in it we find the highest form of all life delineated for us that a created being can possess, so also we find that, under certain conditions, it communicates that life to the spirit of man.

The Word, therefore, contains life as the seed contains vitality, or the acorn the oak; but just as they need to be sown in the earth and be subject to the influence of air, light, and warmth before there can be germination, so the Word must fall from the hand of the Invisible Sower into an understanding heart before it yields up the life it contains. Divine power alone can open the heart—deposit the seed of the Word, and cause it to give life to the spirit. And though the one who has been the recipient of life may not be able to explain in what sense it (the Word) possesses vitality, they will at least be able to say, "I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou has *quicken'd me*" (Ps. cxix. 93). And all such

will have the deepest reverence for the Word of Life not talking loudly of the "spirit" of the Word, and yet, at the same time, despising what is too often termed the "letter," for they know that there can be no true possession of the former without the latter; for to true faith they are one. And to affect to obey the one without the other, is to display a great amount of ignorance respecting the nature of the Word of God. Those who obey the "letter" will have an experience of the power and sweetness of the "spirit" of the Word, which those who despise the letter, yet give eloquent harangues about the beauty and utility of the truth, can never never possess.

## II. To show in what manner it CONVEYS life.

We need constantly to remind ourselves that that the impartation of life to the spiritually dead is in accordance with the Divine sovereignty, and that it is not a necessity on the part of God to quicken anyone. In the spiritual creation, as well as in the natural, the will of God must be perfectly free. He was under no compulsion to form the heavens above us, which show out the glory of His wisdom and power, or the earth beneath us which speaks forth His praise. Neither is He under any constraint to create out of the moral and spiritual ruin, wrought by sin, a new thing, every whit whereof uttereth His glory, the glory of His grace.

By the free, unfettered exercise of the Divine volition, through the medium of the Word, the principle of life is conveyed to the inner being of the man. "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which *liveth* and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23).

Just as the atmosphere around us is the medium through which light is conveyed from the sun to our visual organs, or through which sound is conveyed to our ears, so the Word of God, written or spoken, is the channel through which life and light are conveyed from Himself to us.

The uttered word—the "arise," or "come forth," of the Resurrection Life—was powerful to penetrate the region of death and cause him to loosen his hold upon those over whom he had laid his icy hand, so that they lived and came forth. In exact correspondence to that, the voice of God, which is the expression of

His will, arouses into being those to whom it comes in power. For "of His own *will* begat He us by the Word of truth"; therefore the glad tidings preached in power are effectual under God in saving the soul of the believing one. [For the Gospel of Christ is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."] Satan, knowing this, has his counterfeits and substitutes, and his servants are actively engaged in proclaiming "another Gospel" which is fast filling up the doomed ranks of the self-deceived, who, under its soporific influence, are sleeping the sleep of death. Dark and damning, indeed, is the guilt of those who, actuated by "another spirit," preach "another Jesus." And guilty! terribly guilty! indeed, are those children of God who remain in association with such, instead of obeying the voice of God, "Come out from among them." To remain in fellowship with those systems of men, the fruit of self-will in rejecting the Word of the Lord, where "the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God" is not proclaimed in all its purity and fulness, but where, instead, substitutes of a most questionable kind (even from a worldly standpoint) are being used to attract and retain as adherents the unsaved, is to rob the soul of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost—to destroy fitness for fruit-bearing, and mar the testimony; besides, to suffer loss of reward at the judgment-seat of Christ. Beloved friend, if you are fellowship with such, suffer one word, let no system however hoary with the weight of years, however endeared to you by long association, let no apparent influence or position, hinder you, for one moment deter you, from taking that step which you know to be simple obedience to the Lord. It is yours to do His will, and leave the results with Him.

But to return to our theme. *We* rejoice to be among the number, small in comparison doubtless, who believe that God does not bless anything *contrary* to His word in giving life to the dead, but that He invariably, where the simple, clear Gospel is proclaimed, uses it as the instrument. True it is that He condescends to use human agency, but the immediate instrumentality is His truth, and hence Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, addressing them as his spiritual children, said: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the Gospel*."

He, blessed servant of God as he was, could not say that apart from the Gospel, which he so faithfully preached. Ah, it is no dry, effete thing—a worn-out story—Christ is no myth, a creation of the imagination, as those to whom the word of truth has come, instinct with power, thrilling with vitality, bringing the hush and calm of God's own peace into the spirit, can testify. We gather, then, that He who in the sovereignty of His grace passed by the many widows of Israel in that day of prevailing need, and bestowed His largess upon a Zidonian—or who left the leper-stricken host of the same land in their hopelessness, and healed the Syrian chief—"quickeneth whom He will." This He does by the agency of the Spirit of Life. He is the Almighty, gracious agent; He opens the heart and puts life into the word, and imparts that life to the being. The word (as we have said) has no innate power of its own; it has no inherent vitality that it can convey apart from the Spirit of God. It is simply the instrumental cause of quickening the sinner and comforting the saint. In one sentence, then, it is the "Word of Life," because it in a modified sense contains, and in an instrumental manner conveys, life to those who are dead even while they live.

## THE DEATH OF TERAH.

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS BY A. P. MACDONALD, No. 10.

**Acts vii. 4.** "Then came he [Abraham] out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Charran [O.T. Haran]: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell."

**Gen. xi. 26.** "And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran."

**Gen. xi. 32.** "And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran."

**Gen. xii. 4.** "Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."

**R**ILLIET in the explanatory notes in the margin of his (French) translation of Acts says: "According to Genesis it was sixty years after Abraham had quitted Charran to go into the land of Canaan, that Terah his father, who remained at Charran, ended his days there."

He and others, having taken for granted that Abraham was the eldest son of Terah, have come to the conclusion that the latter

could only have been one hundred and forty-five years of age (seventy and seventy-five) at the time of his son's departure for Canaan. In this case, of course, Gen. xi. 32 contradicts Acts vii. 4, and one or other must be set aside as incorrect.

The difficulty of reconciling the *supposition* that Abraham was Terah's first-born son, the *tradition* that Terah was dead before Abraham left Haran, and the plain *figures* of the Hebrew Scriptures, appears to have made itself felt at a sufficiently early date. Thus the Samaritan text of Gen. xi. 32 gives one hundred and forty-five years as the age of Terah when he died. This version is so plausible, and replies so perfectly to every objection that a superficial reader would be likely to raise, that one cannot help suspecting an alteration introduced, with this very end in view, by some writer who had only a very limited idea of the divine character of the Book he was copying.

Here, as elsewhere, we can find the explanation we are in search of without going away from the received text of our English Bible. We have only to admit that Abraham, instead of being his father's *eldest* son, was in reality his *youngest*.

There is nothing impossible to begin with in this hypothesis. It is not contradicted by any passage of Scripture. It leaves us a margin wide enough for the sixty years mentioned by Rilliet, removing them from the place he gives them to before the birth of Abraham. It justifies itself by bringing the call of Abraham into harmony with the order we observe continually in sacred history, that while the eldest son has the birthright, as far as earthly rule and inheritance are concerned (unless, indeed, like Esau and Reuben he forfeits it), the choice of God, according to promise, falls on the youngest. Witness the story of Seth, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of David.

What is thus in any case a possibility becomes probable when we find, in this same book of Genesis, an exactly similar instance, in which the family register *must* be interpreted in the same way that we propose to interpret that of Terah.

I refer to the account of the family of Noah. In Gen. v. 32 it is written, "And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat

Shem, Ham, and Japheth." Many readers conclude from the order in which the names of Noah's sons are inserted in this verse that Shem was his first-born and Japheth his youngest, just as they suppose that Abraham was older than Nahor and Haran, because, in Gen. xi. 26, he is named before them. But a careful examination of the evidence which the book of Genesis puts at our disposition will lead us to a contrary conclusion. Thus:—

The age of Noah at the time of the Flood (Gen. vii. 6) was	600 years.
The duration of the Flood (Gen. vii. 11; viii. 13-14),	1 "
Between the Flood and the birth of Arphaxad (Gen. xi. 10),	2 "
<hr/>	
From which it follows that Noah's age at the birth of Arphaxad was	603 years.
But Shem was an hundred years old when he begat Arphaxad (Gen. xi. 10),	100 "
<hr/>	
Therefore Noah at the date of Shem's birth was aged	<u>503 years.</u>

But as Noah was five hundred years old when he begat his first-born son, Shem cannot be the son in question.

We know from Gen. ix. 24 that Ham was his youngest son, therefore the order of birth is: Japheth, Shem, and Ham.

This seems to be the plain meaning of Gen. x. 21, where the rendering of the A.V. has been retained in the R.M., but changed, most unwisely I think, in the R.V.

I repeat that the previous occurrence, in the First Book of Moses, of a verse in which the order of birth is inverted, and where the text does not indicate such an inversion, authorises us to suppose an analogous repetition in chapter xi. 26, and establishes our supposition on a strong basis of probability.

But from probability we advance to something very like certainty when we collate what might be called the circumstantial evidence in the matter. Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and son of Haran, is spoken of as an old man in Gen. xix. 31. Now we know that, when Sodom was destroyed, Abraham's age was between ninety-nine and a hundred years (Gen. xvii. 1, and xxi. 5). But if Abraham was the eldest son, and therefore born in the seventieth year of his father's life, we can scarcely be mistaken in advancing that he would have been thirty-five years of age before

the birth of Lot, who, in this case, would be his younger brother's son. If this had been so, Lot would only have been in his sixty-third or sixty-fourth year, and could hardly have been considered aged at a time when the duration of human life was so very much greater than it is at present. And the whole story of Lot and Abraham does not suggest to the mind of the reader that there was any marked difference of age between the two men.

Again we read in Gen. xi. 29 that Nahor, Abraham's son took to wife Milcah, "the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah." Jewish tradition affirms that Iscah, Haran's daughter, is the same person as Sarai, Abraham's wife. According to this legend, the two younger brothers, Nahor and Abraham, married two sisters, Milcah and Iscah (otherwise Sarai), who were the daughters of their elder brother Haran. This throws considerable light on Gen. xx. 12, from which it would appear that Haran and Abraham were sons of two different wives of Terah. We learn, further, that "Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees" (Gen. xi. 28); and that Sarah was ten years younger than Abraham (Gen. xvii. 17).

From all these things we arrive at the following conclusions:—

1. That Gen. xi. 26, like Gen. xxxii., gives the father's age at the birth of his first-born son, without indicating which was the first-born. The one best known to the reader is mentioned first.

2. That Haran was Terah's eldest son, and Abraham his youngest.

3. That sixty years elapsed between the birth of the former and of the latter.

4. That Terah was therefore one hundred and thirty years of age at the birth of the latter.

5. That Moses is correct in stating that he was two hundred and five years old when he died; and Stephen correct in affirming that he was dead before Abraham departed from Charran.

We should not consider the *quantity* of our services so much as the *quality*: a small bit of gold is of more value than a large lump of dross.

## ON PROSPERITY.

IT requires more grace to bear prosperity in a right spirit than adversity: one is apt to ensnare—the other humbles us, and teaches us self-knowledge. When all is going on smoothly with us, and we are sitting quite at our ease, we scarcely feel that we are pilgrims and strangers upon earth, and are seldom so earnest in seeking a heavenly inheritance. In prosperity we often slide into a spirit of conformity to the world almost imperceptibly. Many a Christian who has stood his ground boldly against the frowns and persecutions of the world, and passed through deep affliction in safety, has been won by its smiles in the time of prosperity, and brought either to deny his Lord, or has sunk into a state of deadness and lukewarmness of soul. Peter, who zealously stood up for Christ in the garden of Gethsemane in the face of the Roman soldiers, denied Him while sitting at ease by the fire-side in the palace of the high priest! How pure and unblemished was the character of David during the days when he watched his father's sheep, and when he suffered from the bitter persecution of Saul! But when he was exalted to the throne of Israel, when he exchanged the shepherd's crook for the kingly sceptre, and the humble tent of Jesse for the princely palace, he fell into those sins which caused him to water his couch with tears, and the remembrance of which embittered his future days. Oh, how much mercy there is in the failings of the saints being recorded! If they were set forth as perfect characters, we might indeed be discouraged, and almost ready to despair, when we feel our corruptions strong and our enemies so numerous and powerful. If we read that the father of the faithful lied—that the man after God's own heart became an adulterer and murderer—that the bold apostle, who was so ready to go with his Master to prison and to death, yet so shamefully denied Him—what lessons of humility and watchfulness should it teach us! What tenderness towards our back-sliding brethren! when we remember that we are liable to the same temptations, and that it is by grace we stand, and by *grace alone* that any are kept through faith unto salvation.

C.

## MINISTRY IN TEMPORAL THINGS.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, BY J. R. C.

## I Cor. xvi. 3.

ASK your special attention to the principle laid down here as to ministry in temporal things, and the wide difference between it and the principle that guides as to ministry in spiritual things.

Suppose that one comes into an assembly, it may even be a stranger personally unknown, but commended by those amongst whom he resides and ministers. He requires to ask leave from no man, but is at liberty to exercise the gift God has given him for teaching or exhortation, in direct responsibility to the Lord.

If the Lord has given him a message for the assembly it is his responsibility as a "good steward" to give it forth, and it is the assembly's privilege to receive it as from the Lord.

The assembly has no part in the bestowal of such gift, and therefore has no right to control the administration of it.

But when we come to the ministration of carnal things, it is easy to see how different the principle is. Only imagine for a moment such a stranger, rising up without consultation, taking possession of "the collection," and proposing to dispose of it as he thought fit! The absurdity and unrighteousness of thus applying the principle that regulates ministry in spiritual things to ministry in carnal things is at once apparent.

Here, in verse 3, the principle is laid down, "**Whomsoever ye shall approve.**" See also 2 Cor. viii. 19, "Who was chosen of the churches to travel with us." So also in Acts vi. 3, it is, "Look ye out," and verse 5, "They chose." "Looking out" and "choosing" are not functions that pertain to the saints in relation to spiritual ministry, and it is as far from the mind of God for the saints to "look out for" or "choose" their teachers, as for any, *without being chosen*, to take charge of money contributed by the church.

We hold, therefore, that scripture affords no instruction to the churches to choose, appoint, or ordain to spiritual ministry. But that the duty of the saints to choose those in



whom the whole assembly has confidence, to minister in carnal things, is plainly laid down.

The object of this method is clear. See 2 Cor. viii. 20, "That no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us." Hence even the apostle required to be "prayed with much entreaty" (2 Cor. viii. 4) to take upon him this service; and when he did undertake it he would not do so alone, but would associate with himself throughout the whole transaction, others *chosen, proved, and diligent*.

There are cases in which, at the beginning of an assembly where only two or three have been gathered, the collection for rent or other expenses has been naturally taken charge of by one without any formal choosing, but with the full knowledge and consent of the others.

But after a time this little assembly develops and is largely added to. The collections increase, and each member feels some responsibility as to the administration of what is contributed. Trouble has arisen in such a case by the one who acted as treasurer all along continuing to do so without taking means to ascertain whether or not the whole assembly had confidence in his discretion and integrity. By-and-by murmuring arises, inquiry is demanded, and ill-feeling generated. All this might have been avoided by the one who had all along been in charge asking the assembly to choose one to co-operate with him, "that no man might blame him"; or, better still, asking them to choose whom they would, but invariably at least two, to take the responsibility.

This principle, like all God's ways, is reasonable and prudent, and failure to act it out breeds, sooner or later, discontent and trouble.

And inasmuch as those so put in trust are chosen by the church, trusted by the church, and are stewards of the church's bounty, it naturally follows that they should render account to the church of the use made of their contributions.

There should be nothing done loosely or carelessly in the things of God. It is the highest *business* a man can be engaged in, and if the satisfactory conducting of ordinary business is impossible without *books* in which every transaction is registered, how much more important must it be to keep an orderly record

of that which is done in the name of the Lord. "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say."

Verses 5-7. "I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit." Paul had his plans for the future. He did not affect that kind of spirituality which purposed and planned nothing. But on the other hand, what he purposed he purposed not in the flesh (2 Cor. i. 17), but in subjection to the Lord. Therefore he could write to them, "I purpose to do so and so, if the Lord permit."

This exactly corresponds with Jas. iv. 13-15. The thing condemned is not the plan or purpose, not even the object in view, "to buy and sell and get gain"; that is only what every man in any commercial undertaking must do. What is condemned is the boastful, worldly, godless spirit, which leaves out of calculation two elements of prime importance—first, *the Lord's will*; secondly, *the vanity of life*.

Therefore, whatever our purposings, whether in connection with spiritual service or with commercial pursuits, let them be governed by the fear of the Lord; let them be formed before Him. They may be the dictates of natural prudence, or they may, as in Paul's case, be the promptings of genuine desire and spiritual affection; but whatever motive be at work, let the eye be ever open to discern the Lord's direction, and let the heart be ever disciplined to yield to His will, even though it may cross our plans and purposings.

---

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Daniel i.-iv.

**T**HERE is much interest attaching to the person of this great Gentile. The place he occupies in the progress of the Divine dispensations, the circumstances which connect him with the saints of God, and his own personal history, all contribute to give him a place in our recollections, and to read us some holy and important lessons.

He was the man in whom God set up the Gentiles. The house of David, the throne of Judah, had corrupted itself, the measure of the people's iniquity was full, and the term of the Divine long-suffering was spent, in Nebuchadnezzar's day; and he is used by the Lord to be the rod of His indignation

against Jerusalem and the hand to receive from Him the sword of rule and judgment in the earth.

The glory had departed. It had left the earth. The prophet had seen it in its gradual and reluctant, but sure and judicial flight on the cherubim and the wheels, as far as the mountains on its way to heaven. But though "the glory is departed" might have been written on Jerusalem, "the glory is here" could not be correspondingly written on any seat or city of the nations.\*

This Chaldean, however, this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, is set up by the Lord, and the sword is committed to him. Power in the earth for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well, is put into his hand, formally put there by God, on the glory forsaking the earth, on the Lord for the present refusing to take His place as king of Israel.

This is Nebuchadnezzar's connection with the dispensational purposes of God. He was glad, of course, to extend his dominions, and let his conquests be known far and wide, and Jerusalem is welcome plunder to him; but all the while he was fulfilling the purposes of God.

At length his sword is in its sheath, and we see him, not in connection with the *purposes*, but with the *saints* of God; and then we get a more personal sight of him, and a subject of still holier interest and meaning. For then we see the *man* under Divine operation, and not merely the *power* under Divine commission and appointment. It is this sight which Daniel gives of him in these chapters.

The tumult of war being over, and the sword, as I said in its sheath again, the king is seen in his palace at Babylon. His royal estate he purposes to set off to all advantage. Elegancies, and accomplishments, and provisions of all sorts shall fill his courts. Both his greatness

and his pleasures shall be served by all that conquered lands can furnish, and the ancient land of the glory is now only one of them. Babylon, famed for its wisdom in its astrologers and soothsayers, shall be set off by some of the captive youths of Judah distinguished for their understanding science, and skilfulness in knowledge. This is the first chapter.

As it often happens, the Lord comes to disturb him. His heart is moved, if not his estate and condition in the world. Ere he went to sleep on one much-to-be-remembered night, he is thinking on what was to be hereafter. He then sleeps and dreams, and the dream being all about what was to be hereafter, shows that the hand of God was in the whole scene.

The king, however, does not understand anything of all this. Even the dream itself goes from him. He has no remembrance of it. It leaves uneasiness behind it, but that is all.

Often is it thus with the soul. There is a disturbance, but no intelligence. A restlessness has been awakened, but whence it came is not known, or whether it goes (what is its purpose) is not conjectured. And it is too high for man. It is the hand of God, and mere man cannot reach it. All the wisdom of Babylon is at fault. The dream—the departed dream—which had left only its shadow to scare the heart of the king, is beyond all Chaldean art.

This is beautifully significant. We live amid these wonderful shakings, these operations of God with the hearts of the children of men. And when it is with the elect, the work thus begun is conducted to a blessed issue.

The man of God, however, gets into the secret. The saint is made to know the mind of God in this great operation of His hand. Daniel tells it all to the king.

Nebuchadnezzar is, naturally, moved to wondering admiration. The knowledge of the prophet is marvellous in his eyes, and all that he can do for him he is ready to do. The wisdom of the God of Daniel he also religiously acknowledges, and, under the excitement, even delights in it.

This is the second chapter.

But with all this, he is but Nebuchadnezzar still, a mere child of nature, the sport of human passions, and of the devil's wiles. Vanity

\* The silence of scripture is, at times, holy and impressive. I observe this as to the ark. We are not told a word about its fate in the day of Jerusalem's sorrow. It is never mentioned. The theme was too sacred. The ark was the symbol of the Divine presence, and the Spirit could not contemplate its captivity, if He could not do so in connection with glorious victory, as in 1 Sam. iv. Therefore He will leave it untraced in the day of Jerusalem's downfall. When next it is seen, it is in heaven (Rev. xi. 15).

seems to feed on the communications which the prophet of God had delivered. Wonderful but natural. These communications had dealt with solemn truths; that an image was to be broken in pieces and made like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. But this is all passed by the heart of the king, and that he himself was the head of this image, the golden head of it, is all that practically works on him. His pride can get food out of that, and the rest may remain for a future day, however awful it may be.

Accordingly, he sets up a *golden* image for all to worship. All orders and estates of men are summoned by musical instruments of all sorts to own the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Marvellous that our hearts can so deal with God's revelations! God had spoken of an image being broken to pieces, and scattered like the chaff before the wind; Nebuchadnezzar can set up an image to be honoured with divine honours by all the world! How falsely the heart traffics with Divine truth! We turn to the present account of our own vanity what connects itself with the most solemn of all realities!

Admiration of God's wisdom will not do. Nebuchadnezzar had that. But with that, he was a self-worshipper, and to himself he can sacrifice everything. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the very instruments for awakening that admiration, shall burn in the fiery furnace, if they consent not to fall down before this image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Wonderful infatuation! God however is but again displayed. If *wisdom* belong to Him, so does *power*. If He can reveal secrets and make known the thoughts of the head upon the bed of the children of men, He can quench the violence of fire; and save every hair of the head from perishing, though in a burning fiery furnace.

The king is again moved. And he does more than before. He had honoured the servants of the God of wisdom already, now he is for honouring the God of power Himself, establishing His name in the land and, making reverence of Him a part of the business of the state, a standing ordinance of the realm (iii.).

But what of this? He is, as before, only

Nebuchadnezzar still, the haughty, self-pleased, self-pleasing child of dust, man who, like Adam of old, would be as God. For after these witnesses of Divine wisdom and power, and after the motions which his heart and conscience had thus passed through, he was as in earlier days, "At rest in his house and flourishing in his palace" (iv. 4). He was the same self-pleased, self-pleasing, important king of Babylon.

Nature outlives a thousand checks and improvements. The new wine poured into the old bottles is but spilt. "We have piped unto you, but ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." The various melody of the dispensations of God are lost in the dull ear of man.

But the Lord is not weary. He can still sit at the well and talk with the sinner. He shakes the heart of this king with another dream, and Daniel again interprets it.

It is still, however, the new wine in the old bottle, and is spilt as before. Twelve months after this solemn visitation, the king walks in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, and his poor proud heart, after all this, can say, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty (iv. 30).

Here surely is *old* Nebuchadnezzar still, the "old man" of nature. The Divine revelations are spent on him in vain. All the goodly emotions are but as the morning cloud and early dew. The new wine, to be preserved, must be put into new bottles.

And so, at last, it is. Nebuchadnezzar is made a new bottle. Deeply and solemnly is this process conducted, and this work accomplished. The sentence of death is awfully laid on him. The case is one of great character. And it might well be so, because, as we have seen, the light of the wisdom of God and the hand of the power of God, had already addressed this man, and the further care and diligence of the Lord had been, in the recent dream, also bestowed upon him; but all to no real purpose. The new wine had been spilt again and again. Nebuchadnezzar is the same man still, and the old bottle is cast away; the former vessel having been marred in the wheel, the lump is now taken into the Potter's hand, to fashion it another vessel, as it pleases Him.

The story of this operation, as I said, is solemn indeed.

“Man that is in honour and understandeth not is like the beasts that perish.” In honour, indeed, Nebuchadnezzar had been, but he had not understood, and now he becomes as a beast. “He was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.”

Thus he is made to know himself, and to learn the lesson that he was, in all his honour, as brutish as the cattle of the field, having no understanding.

The occasion was special, and the display of the operation of God signal almost without a parallel. But if he learn that “he has destroyed himself,” he shall learn also that there is One that lifts up even from dunghills; and under the further working of His gracious as well as mighty hand, Nebuchadnezzar revives. He becomes a risen man in due season. The field and the oxen are left. His understanding returns to him, his kingdom and its glory, his honour and its brightness, his nobles and his counsellors, all return to him, and even excellent majesty is added to him. And then, as one of understanding indeed, who had come to the knowledge of God and himself he no longer thinks of honouring God by state decrees and ordinances of his realm, but bows before Him as Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and publishes His doings. He is no longer the *king*, but the *dependant*. The old thing is passed away, and all is become new.

---

#### QUERIES FOR BELIEVERS.

What are you? The chief of sinners (1 Tim. i. 15).

What do you call yourself? A Christian (Acts xi. 26; 1 Peter iv. 16).

What persuasion are you? I am persuaded, &c. (Rom. viii. 38).

Where do you worship? In the holiest (Heb. x. 19, 20).

What do you do every Lord’s day? Break bread (Acts xx. 7).

What is your creed? The Word of God (1 Peter i. 25).

Who is your minister or teacher? The Holy Ghost (1 Cor. ii. 13).

## THE EARTHLY RELATIONS OF THE HEAVENLY FAMILY.

ALL that the mind of man naturally knows of the gospel of the grace of God, it knows only to pervert from God’s object, in order to subserve its own interest. There are those who perceive in the gospel a conservative principle; and it becomes associated, in their minds, with the preservation of the present order of things; and so far they will use it and uphold it. Others again perceive in it a destructive element—one which levels the existing order of things; and they will also use it as an engine to promote the ends they have in view. Now both these are assuredly to be found in the Scriptures, but not as conflicting elements.

The personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was, in many instances, an inroad on all that was fair and orderly in the eyes of men. It was cast as a reproach upon Him that He associated with publicans and sinners, thus invading the social order which he found; and when he was in company with those who esteemed themselves wise and virtuous, by the neglect of some one of those conventional rules by which society was upheld, He cast contempt upon it. “A certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with Him: and He went in and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye *fools*, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also?” The ties of natural relationship were so dealt with by our Lord, as to lead the thoughts to those of another kind, founded on that which would secure permanent blessedness, by virtue of union with Himself: “Then one said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee. But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother” (Luke viii. 21).

The character also in which Christianity was presented to the minds of the heathen, was as that which subverted the present order of things. We can and do see that it so acted on Judaism as a social system; but we do not so readily acknowledge that it so acted as a general principle. When Paul and Silas were dragged before the Magistrates at Philippi, the charge against them was, "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, *being Romans*" (Acts xvi. 21).

This is a valuable testimony from impartial witnesses of the uncompromising character of Christianity; it could not amalgamate with Romanism: it must subvert the order established by the masters of the world, that it might establish its own blessed order on the ruins of the other. The same testimony as to the light in which the gospel, as preached by the Apostles, was received by those who heard them, is again afforded at Thessalonica. It was not received merely as a scheme of future salvation, but as an innovation on existing things. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also: whom Jesus hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 7).

But then, on the other hand, there are most explicit directions given to Christians as to their conduct in the several relations of life; entering very minutely into the relative duties of husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants. As subjects to earthly rulers, the directions are no less explicit: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." These, and similar directions abounding in the practical application of the epistles, most clearly show that there was no room for proud men to raise questions and strifes of words, as to subsiding relations being so entirely subverted by Christianity that the believer had nothing to do with them.

Surely the possibility of the thought that a Christian was free from the authorities of the world, must have led to the oft-repeated precepts with regard to submission. The danger ever would have been to have used our liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. The assertion, that "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, bond nor free," would have led to the conclusion in the minds of those who savoured the things that were of men, and not the things of God, that the gospel had so broken in upon the natural order of things, as to leave men to self-will, independence, and misuse. Hence we find in the Apostolic writings the most minute directions given for the sustainment of those relationships which only subsist whilst we are in the flesh, and have no place at all in the glory in heaven. There Christ is "all and in all"; and every other relationship is swallowed up in the relationship to Him, and to all saints as one with Him. This is known to faith now; but the exhibition of the manifold grace of God comes in here, in meeting all these natural relationships so as to sustain them by grace, and to make them spheres of service to the Lord.

There is *nothing* which shows real present deliverance from the world more than walking in grace in these relationships, whilst realising our oneness in Christ. Many have even been deterred from following on into the unity of the Spirit, by seeing Christians so little able to walk in grace, as to make unity in their eyes to be nothing more than the depressing of others in order to exalt self. Now I believe there has been an impatience, which has prevented our minds from searching into the real principle on which these relations stand to a Christian. There is a great depth of truth at the bottom of them; and it has been thought a readier way, on the one hand, to assert Christian union as equality in the flesh; and on the other, to sustain the natural order by mere human arrangement or authority.

The whole natural order is disorganised by sin; and God must first separate from it to himself, and then, "as He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." This was the principle of Judaism (Lev. xx. 26). This separation from existing things to Himself is the principle of

the Church. But Christ is the power of separation, as we see in Luke v. 11. "They forsook all, and followed Him." "And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father; and He called them. And they immediately left the ship and *their father*, and followed Him": and then we have the general doctrine: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

The ruling principle of man's order was human convenience; and when that was interfered with, the relationship was sacrificed to it. The ruling principle of the new order is subjection to God, and that brought about by the introduction of a new relationship paramount to all subsisting ones, even union with Christ; so that the sustainment of all natural ones becomes subordinate to this, and this subordination is their true preservation: in sustaining them, we are simply subject to Him. When the Lord was exercising His ministry here, he found how easily man had set aside the most solemn sanction of God for the preservation of the natural order; thus shewing the entire unsoundness of the principle of human convenience, or merely conventional righteousness. "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or mother. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." So again, we find, "the Pharisees came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning, made them [a] male and [a] female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?" Now, in both these instances, we find the law (weak through the flesh) utterly inefficient for the preservation of these relation-

ships, beyond the claim of mere convenience and deference to the opinions of men.

Until, therefore, the principle of self-denial was introduced as flowing from union with Jesus risen, and of deference to His will in every respect, there could be no secure ground for the sustainment of even these relations.

---

### BROTHERLY LOVE.

THE thing to promote brotherly love is love. The unchanging law from the first is, "herb and tree *yielding fruit after his kind*" (Genesis i. 11). Corn bears corn, and nettles produce nettles. And just as surely love bears love, and pride produces pride. So let us seek to sow broadcast after the Blessed Pattern, who fell into the ground and died, that He might yield fruit after His kind. One thing that may mar this is impatience, expecting fruit too soon. I have seen this in my children, and have felt it in my own experience. I expect fruit before its time, or fruit of a kind too high, not seeing how God accepts "the good smell" of the "tender grape," while it is yet sour (song of Sol. ii. 13). Any one can see that the image of God, when it comes, is "very good" (Gen. i. 27, 31), when the new man created in righteousness rules the whole creature; but the one thing is to be like God, to see what is good in brethren from the fruit, and when any light has come, to see with God "that it is good" (Gen. i. 4). That verse in Acts, where we are told that when Barnabas went to Antioch "he saw the grace of God" in them, has been of use to me. He saw the grace of God, for he saw with the eyes of grace—"he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost"—and good men yet see grace, even when it is in the bud, where carnal and proud souls only see the flesh in some poor weak brother. Let us thus seek the things which edify, duly estimating what is of Christ in each other: so shall the body be united rather than torn asunder.

"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God." C.

---

THE secret of being happy and safe, is keeping always before us the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following:—

What is the meaning of the precept, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. vii. 1)? and how can it be reconciled with the instruction of 1 Cor. v. 12, "Do not ye judge them that are within"?

Is it scriptural to say that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God from all eternity?

Matt. xix. 24, 25.—Please distinguish between "the kingdom of the heavens" and "the kingdom of God"; also between the kingdom of "our Lord" and "His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15).

Is there any scriptural warrant for the assertion, made by many students of prophecy, that the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt?

What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for *introducing* those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them?

What constitutes a type in Scripture; or, what may be *legitimately* designated a type?

Could any reader explain the meaning of 1 John iv. 17, last clause, "Because as He is, so are we in this world"?

### THE PARABLES OF MATTHEW XIII.

**QUESTION 347.**—If the parables of Matthew xiii. have all reference to the present dispensation, how do such passages as "Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them," and "The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just," harmonise with 1 Thess. iv., the removal of the saints from amongst the wicked to meet the Lord in the air?

**Ans. A.**—The Gospel according to Matthew, being a part of Holy Scripture, "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and thus it is profitable for us—for the church—now. Nevertheless the Gospel of Matthew was not given primarily for the Church, or for this dispensation. It was spoken by the blessed Lord for instruction to Israel before the Messiah was rejected, and afterwards written for the instruction of that same people, in times still future, after the Church shall have been translated. From the beginning to the end of the book that is its

character and primary object. This is pre-eminently manifest in its prophetic portions, *i.e.*, this thirteenth chapter and chapters xxiv. and xxv. There are many *most definite Divine markings that these chapters were not given by the Lord to the disciples and others as representatives of the Church; but they were given to them as representatives of Israel at that time, and also at the times when God begins again to deal with Israel and with the nations as such, and when the Son of Man comes to cleanse His floor and establish the government of righteousness.*

The part of the parable of the tares and the wheat, and the exposition thereof, alluded to by the questioner, refers to the ripening of the tares and of the wheat by the terrible decrees and merciless doings of the Antichrist, as seen in Rev. xiii., &c., &c., and by the vigorous Divine protest given from mid-heaven, proclaiming the everlasting Gospel, and the solemn warning given by the third angel (see Rev. xiv. 6-12). The shining forth of the righteous shall be when the Son of Man having come, and having thoroughly cleansed His floor, and having burnt up the chaff with unquenchable fire, He gathers the wheat into the garner. "THEN shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Thus begins a thousand years of righteousness and blessing. J. S.

**Editor's Note.**—The difficulty some find in the words, "Gather up *first* the tares," arises from not seeing the difference between "the 'kingdom'" and "the Church." The kingdom extends over a greater period; and the present church dispensation may, indeed, be said to be only an episode in the kingdom (though of a lengthened character), beginning after and terminating before the two extremes represented in the seven parables of Matt. xiii.

These parables *begin* with the personal ministry of the Son of Man. Therefore earlier than the present church dispensation, which could not have a beginning till, at the Cross, the middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile had been broken down, and until the Holy Spirit was given consequent upon Christ being glorified.

They *terminate* in the establishment of the righteous in the manifested glory of the kingdom of God. Therefore they extend beyond the Church period, which terminates in the taking away of the saints to be with the Lord, prior to the preparation of the earth by judgment, for the reign of Christ and His saints.

### "THE LORD'S TABLE" v. "THE FATHER'S TABLE."

**QUESTION 348.**—Is it Scriptural to call "the Lord's Table" "the Father's Table"?

**Ans. A.**—It was around the Lord's table, as seen in John's gospel, that the Lord Jesus so plainly revealed the Father, that Peter said to Him "Now speakest Thou plainly" (John xvi.). It is in the midst of the church that He declares the Father's name to His brethren. Thus if the broad heart of the Father does not characterise the assemblies, the Lord Jesus is not *indeed* Lord of and Lord in such assemblies; but, if

indeed the Lord rules unhindered, according to His own heart, in the assembly, His table will be the family board in the Father's presence, though it is true that the words "Father's table" do not occur in the New Testament.

M. T. B.

**Ans. B.**—It is never so called in Scripture, and it is never safe to call anything by an unscriptural name. It is true that all the children of God have a birthright privilege to be at the "Lord's table," and should endeavour all and always to be in a fit condition to be there. But if they come in an unfit condition to keep the "feast," it is the "Lord" who judges and not the "Father" (see 1 Cor. xi. 32), and to call it the "Father's table" would be an unscriptural *thought* as well as a wrong expression.

G. A.

**Ans. C.**—In 1 Cor. x. and xi. we find the expression "the Lord's table," "the Lord's death," "the Lord's supper," "the cup of the Lord," "the body and blood of the Lord" all used in the same connection; and as we nowhere find the expression "the Father's table" in the New Testament it will be our wisdom to adhere to the language of Scripture in this and all other matters. The table at which the returned prodigal of Luke xv. sat, does not of necessity signify the table at which we commemorate the Lord's death.

R. L. S.

**Editor's Note.**—As pointed out in the replies given above, the Scriptural term is "the Lord's table," not "the Father's table." Its being so designated in 1 Cor. is in accordance with the line of thought that runs through the whole Epistle. From first to last it sets forth Christ as Lord and the owning of His authority as such, the only remedy for the sectarianism and confusion that existed in the Corinthian church.

But the fact of its being so designated in no way sets aside the truth that the Lord would have around Himself at His table, every one of the "many sons," whom He, as the Firstborn, is bringing to His own eternal glory.

The keeping of the feast is the birthright privilege of every child of God, as the Passover of old was the birthright privilege of every son of Israel. Nevertheless, as under the old dispensation many were hindered through various causes from sharing in that, which under given conditions, was their right and privilege: so many children of God may now be in an unfit condition to share in the holy feast of the new covenant.

The unfitness of some may be inward, a defiled conscience, an unexercised heart, a hindrance that others cannot take cognisance of, but which may be so offensive to the Lord, that in keeping the feast they are eating and drinking judgment to themselves.

In others it may be moral evil, as 1 Cor. v., or doctrinal, as Gal. v. 10, or the causing of division, as Rom. xvi. 17-18, Titus iii. 10; or a thoroughly stubborn and rebellious spirit, as Mat. xviii. 17.

In the first case the Lord Himself judges and chastens. 1 Cor. xi. 32.

In the latter it is the assembly that is called upon to judge, but it is in the name and by authority of the Lord Jesus that the assembly must act. 1 Cor. v. 4, 13.

Thus the ordering, discipline, and judgment of the House of God is committed to the Son.

## FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING

**QUESTION 349.**—Does Eph. v. 4 imply that there are certain "foolish talkings" and "jestings" which are convenient, or does it mean that none of these things are convenient or befitting?

**Ans. A.**—What a mistake Christians make in quoting only part of a verse, or part of a subject, so closely connected that the Holy Ghost leaves no room for division. Such quotations make havoc of Scripture: In verse 4 are *three* things mentioned which we read "are not convenient." One of these is filthiness. Why then separate "foolish talking" and "jesting"? If "filthiness" is not convenient for a "follower of God" (verse 1) who does not wish to do anything that does not "become saints" (verse 3) neither are "foolish talking" and "jesting."

W.

**Ans. B.**—The "foolish talking and jesting" are coupled with fornication, impurity, greed, and filthiness, and this shows their nature. Read, "foolish talking and obscene jesting which do not come up to your level"; this is the full meaning of the original.

D. B.

**Ans. C.**—It assuredly means that none of these things are befitting. "Foolish" means insipid, tasteless, saltless, and, as we are exhorted to have our speech "always with grace, seasoned with salt," we must conclude that foolish talking of every kind is forbidden. "Jesting" means turning a conversation easily and rapidly so as to excite mirth, and it is indulged in by worldlings when their spirits are high. But God's directions as to how His people are to let off their high spirits are found in verses 4, 18, and 19 of this chapter, "giving of thanks," singing "psalms, hymns," &c., and "giving thanks always."

R. L. S.

**Editor's Note.**—"For every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account" (Matt. xii. 36).

"Let no communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good, to the use of edifying" (Eph. iv. 29).

Such passages set before us a high standard, even the perfect example of the Lord Jesus. Let no attempt be made to lower the standard to suit the ungodly tendencies of the carnal mind.

At the same time let it not be supposed that true spirituality is inconsistent with a smile or a hearty laugh, or that natural quality known as wit or humour, which often gives point and power to teaching that otherwise would fall flat and insipid.

It has been said that "a perception of distant similarities is the essence of wit," and certainly the wit that aptly applies a simile, an illustration, or that shows up the absurdity of the wrong, and the reasonableness of the right, by ready use of incident and contrast, is often helpful.

The danger lies in making it one's object to provoke a laugh. Especially when dealing with Divine and eternal things.

But this natural wit or humour, which is appreciated by the many though possessed by the few, is very different from the foolish talking and jesting which is indulged in by the world and which cannot consist with the realised presence of a Holy God.



## THE WORD OF LIFE:

## Its Relation to the Believer.

By J. HIXON IRVING.

"THE WORD OF LIFE" (1 John i. 3).  
 "The Word of Life" (Phil. ii. 16).

## III. To point out how it CONTRIBUTES to the growth of life.

**I**N many respects the deepest teaching that human ears ever heard was that of our Lord in the synagogue at Capernaum, when He announced Himself as the "Bread of Life" (John vi.), teaching which, in its effect upon the bulk of His hearers, was at least an illustration of the words of the Baptist: "His *fan* is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor"; for when He spake of His flesh and blood as being true meat and drink indeed, many of His professed disciples were scattered like chaff before the wind, for we read "they went back and walked no more with Him."

Deeply imbedded in the heart of that sifting discourse, like a priceless gem in its worthy setting, or like "apples of gold in baskets of silver," is this sublime statement, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me," involving this truth, that the life which is deposited in the spirit of the believing one, through the agency of the Holy Ghost and instrumentality of the Word, is sustained by Christ: He who is as to Divine origin, the "Bread of God"; and as to His heavenly descent, the "bread out of heaven"—"the Bread of Life"; and who also, as to His antitypical character, is the "Real Bread"; and His everlasting sufficiency, the "Living Bread."

It is most true that wheat must be bruised and ground to flour before it can be made suitable for food of man; and it is just as true that Christ had to be "bruised for our iniquities" on the cross, and raised from among the dead by the Father's power, before He could become the Bread of Life. He, having passed through death, and taken His place as the mighty enthroned One, became the Living Bread for living men. There can be scarcely a shadow of a doubt that in those precious words of His, which we have just

quoted, there is the fullest anticipation of resurrection. He had, ages before, by His Spirit, in the sweet singer of Israel, uttered those confident words, which we delight to dwell upon: "For David saith concerning Him, I beheld the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore my heart was *glad*, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: because Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou give Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me *full of gladness* with Thy countenance" (Acts ii. 25-28, R.V.). In the realised fulfilment of these words, He is the Real Bread.

Of course, it goes for the saying, that eating of Him, or in other words, believing on Him, is both for the reception and sustentation of life. The feeblest outgoing of faith to Him returns with life; and just as that act is an absolute necessity for the possession of this principle, so is the repeated act, the habit of faith, a necessity for the sustentation of it.

That the imperishable principle has powers of development needs no proof from us; neither that the only wise God has ordained that the Written Word, in which the Living Bread is discovered to faith, is the instrumental means of its growth. And hence we find that among the many metaphors used to bring out the varied character, fulness, value, and power of the Word of God, there are two which indicate its action upon life and contribute to its growth and development, viz., "milk" and "meat" (1 Peter ii. 1; Heb. v. 11-14). The former being emblematic of the simpler elements, whilst the latter sets forth the more abstruse and difficult portions of the Word of Life. Both are essential to the growth of a vigorous and intelligent spirituality. The truth in its more rudimentary aspect is for "just born babes." This they need, and for this they should, like the babe that craves for its proper nutriment, earnestly long and make use of the undiluted and unadulterated milk of the Word.

How much of the future of physical life, of happiness or misery, strength or weakness, depends upon the quality and quantity of the food it is fed upon during its infant days.

Suitable food in proportionate quantities will lay the foundation of health, strength, and happiness; whilst the reverse will sow the seeds of suffering and disease. And how true this is in the spiritual world. If the babe in Christ makes a diligent use of those portions of the Word of God suited to his age and capacity, he will in all probability lay the foundation of future intelligence, strength, and usefulness. But to neglect the Word of Life, or receive it as filtered through creeds and catechisms of men, will result in spiritual ignorance, weakness, and fruitlessness. Care must likewise be taken by the "babes," not to substitute "solid food" for simple "milk," or, in other words, not to exercise themselves in things too high for them. This is frequently done, and is fraught with mischief. A close acquaintance with the fourfold life of the Son of God and the Son of Man, as revealed in the gospels, is better far, a thousand times better, than a superficial knowledge of the typology of the past, or the prophecies concerning the future, and behind it all an ignorance of Him, His words, works, and ways, and, in consequence, a starved, ill-fed soul. Alas! in many instances, professing Christians have become so super-spiritual and hypercritical, that they have got far beyond the four gospels and the truth taught therein, and, as a result, are in a most pitiable state of spiritual pride.

Our Lord fully recognised the need His disciples had of the simpler elements of truth during their infantile days, as we find from His words to them as His exodus drew near:—"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi. 12, 13).

A few of the "many things" He taught them after His resurrection, "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts i. 3). It was not His will that they should remain in a state of abnormal babyhood, and hence such words as "When He, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, He will guide you into all truth." When the promise concerning the gift of the Spirit was fulfilled, they entered upon what we may, with all reverence, term their spiritual adolescence, when they acquired new powers and had new wants, and were able to digest solid food. Thus we perceive it is the will of the Father that all His children should grow, so that "babes" may become "young men," and

these in their turn become "fathers"; yet how His heart must be grieved when He looks upon the feeble life of some of His loved ones, life telling of stunted powers, feeble intelligence, and blunted sensibilities. An apostle could only say of such, if he wrote them, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. iii. 2). Yet, thank God, there is a large number, a growing number, who, by a skilful use of His Word, are daily "growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," and who, like the patriarch of Uz, find His truth "more than their necessary portion." They live by the spoken word of their God, and such are not content with the "words, words, words" of the mere declaimer or anecdotalist; their souls despise the empty sentimental trash of modern religious periodicals; they care not for the word-painting of the mere pulpiteer whose business it is to produce effect; but they long for, and are only satisfied with, the spoken words of the Living God. May their number grow apace, for it is by such, and such only, that God is in reality glorified.

*(To be continued.)*

ELEMENTARY ARTICLES, No. 7.

## NAMES APPLIED TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE first name applied to God's people I would ask you to look at occurs in Acts v. 13.

### "BELIEVERS

were . . . added to the Lord." It does not say they were added to the church, or to one another, but that they were added to the Lord. In their gathering together, they were brought into the place of subjection to Christ as Lord. In seeking to be added to an assembly of the Lord's people, or in receiving into that assembly, it is going deliberately into that circle where Christ is owned as Lord. Those desiring to unite with an assembly gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ are expected to come in that spirit. Only in that spirit can they be blest, and only in that spirit can they be made a blessing.

### DISCIPLES

is another name given to God's people. It

occurs in Acts xx. 7. "Upon the first day of the week, the *disciples* came together to break bread." The word *disciple* occurs frequently in the New Testament. We begin by being believers in the Lord Jesus; through faith we enter into life; then we are added to the Lord, and that puts us into the place of disciples—that is, learners at the feet of Jesus as our Teacher and as our Example. God would have His people recognised as disciples of the Lord Jesus. Now-a-days we don't often hear that word applied to children of God. Why is this? It is a word that tests us; and because of our failure and sin it is felt to apply so little to us. The first element in discipleship is self-denial—the taking up of the Cross and following in the footsteps of the Master.

#### BRETHREN

is another name by which we are known as God's people. We get it in Acts xviii. 27. "When he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the *brethren* wrote exhorting to receive him." We are brethren because children of one common Father. That constitutes brotherhood. I would impress upon your heart the shame and wrong of using the term "brethren" in any narrower sense than embracing every child of the Father. Every child of God is one of the brethren. We ought not to use that holy term in a sectarian sense. The Lord said to Mary Magdalene on the morning of His resurrection: "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and, your God." That is the reason we are brethren. We are brought into this relationship through faith in Christ Jesus.

Again, we see from Acts xi. 26 that the disciples were called

#### CHRISTIANS

first at Antioch. This word "called," implies "called of God." It might be read—"The disciples were *called of God*, Christians, first at Antioch." There is a deep significance in this, because Antioch was the first place where converts from Jew and Gentile were brought together into one fellowship. It was at Antioch that the difficulty arose about Peter withdrawing from the fellowship in order to meet with those that were Jews; and Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. There would have been a Jewish

and a Gentile assembly if it had not been for the faithfulness of Paul. He perceived that the very foundation of the Gospel was at stake. That by a separation between Jews and Gentiles upon matters that pertained to a former dispensation now done away by the Cross of Christ, there would be a reasserting of fleshly distinctions and a practical denial of the grand truth that Jew and Gentile are one in the risen Christ. Hence his stout resistance of the course that had been pursued, and his unyielding, uncompromising attitude.

Then we might refer to other names in this connection, which occur in the New Testament, such as

#### SAINTS,

or holy ones; holy, through being set apart unto God in Christ Jesus by His precious blood and by the Holy Spirit. Then there are also the names,

#### CHILDREN OF GOD AND SONS OF GOD;

but whatever Divine title it is, every one of them has this characteristic—it excludes all the world and includes all saints. This is a fundamental truth for us to learn; a truth that all that is in us by nature would reject. There is no real spiritual recognition of these Divine titles throughout Christendom; they are practically ignored and set aside. Were I to go now to any town where there are the usual denominational congregations, but no assembly gathered upon scriptural lines, and to inquire for "the Christians," I would probably be told they were all Christians in that town. But the inquiry could never lead to any assembly bearing that designation, and that only. Were I to ask for "Disciples" or for "Believers," or where "the Children of God" are wont to assemble, the inquiry would be equally unintelligible. They would point to Established, Free, U.P., or Episcopal churches, but scriptural names and scriptural ideas have no place in the thoughts and ways of modern Christendom. Does not this show how deep and how serious is the departure of Christendom generally from the thoughts and ways of God. The very A B C of Divine principles is a mystery. Nothing exists that answers in the broadest essentials, or even in name, to scriptural gatherings of the saints.

We are disciples of the Lord Jesus, at least we profess to be; let us own no master but

Christ, no authority but His Word, no instruction but that which is of His Spirit.

We are brethren; let us love as such, with a pure heart fervently, every child of God, and seek in grace and in faithfulness to lead them into the ways which be in Christ.

We are believers; let ours be a life of faith, of subjection to and dependence on the Lord Himself.

We are saints; let us "abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good."

Let us practically give up the thoughts and ways that go to form the Babel of Christendom, and return to the simplicity which is in Christ. The only path in which we can please God is the path that starts by taking up and owning nothing but the names that God gives to His people.

### STREAMS FROM LEBANON.

(Cant. iv. 12-15.)

THE streams from lofty Lebanon  
Refresh the weary land,  
When burning winds with scorching heat  
Sweep o'er the desert sand.  
Cool are the streams from Lebanon:  
The reaper stoops to lave  
The sweat-drops from his fevered brow  
In the reviving wave.  
Welcome the streams from Lebanon  
To traveller's parched lips:  
New life he feels, fresh vigour gains,  
As the clear draught he sips.  
Pure are the streams from Lebanon:  
Their source the snowy height,  
Far above earth's corrupted springs,  
Still bathed in heaven's own light.  
My soul, get thou to Lebanon,  
Breathe in that holy air,  
If thou wouldst be a chosen stream,  
Life's waters sweet to bear.  
Go oft with *Him* to Lebanon—  
He fain would have thee there,  
That, far removed from earthly jar,  
His thoughts He may declare.  
Then, in *His* strength, from Lebanon  
Go forth His grace to tell,  
That other thirsty souls may drink  
From life's clear springing well.

### THE SOJOURNINGS OF THE ISRAELITES.

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS BY A. P. MACDONALD, NO. II.

**Gen. xv. 13.** "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years."

**Acts. vii. 6.** "And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years."

**Ex. xii. 40.** "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwell in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years."

**Gal. iii. 16, 17.** "Now to Abraham we the promises spoken, and to his seed. . . . Now this I say; A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect" (K.V.).

BY far the greater number of commentators on the above scriptures have taken for granted that the four hundred years of the two first passages, and the four hundred and thirty years of the last two, refer to the length of time between the same two dates. They have further assumed that both figures are intended to represent the duration of the servitude of the Hebrews in the land of Egypt. Indeed, the revisers of 1881 have adopted and sanctioned this popular error by rendering Ex. xii. 40, as if it read: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, *which they sojourned in Egypt*, was four hundred and thirty years"—a translation which neither agrees with the language of the original, nor with the facts of the history. When some men introduce a "discrepancy" into the English Bible it is very easy for other men to come after them and "discover" it. Then follows the usual battle between the clever and unscrupulous "critic" of God's Word, and the inaccurate and incompetent "defender" thereof, of whom it is hard to say whether the former or the latter does more injury to the cause of truth.

The truth in this case is that the two periods mentioned terminate at the same point of time, but begin the one thirty years later than the other, and neither the one nor the other is a statement of the length of time Israel sojourned in Egypt.

Let us consider the four texts quoted,

beginning with the last, as to the meaning of which there is least room for discussion.

GAL. III. 16, 17. Note that "the promises" of verse 16 are spoken of as "the promise" in verse 17. That is to say, there was one promise of the inheritance repeated at different times. Obviously the four hundred and thirty years must count from the first communication of the promise to Abraham. This (as I hope to show in another paper, if the Lord will) took place at Ur of the Chaldees, before Abram set out on his journeyings. Thus the beginning of the epoch specified is the reception of the first promise God made to Abram concerning his posterity and inheritance. The end is defined by the Apostle Paul to be "the giving of the law" to Moses, which took place in the year of the Exodus from Egypt.

Ex. xii. 40. If attention be paid to the exact words of this verse it will be seen that the *subject* of the sentence is "the sojourning," and what is *predicated* about this sojourning is that it "was (*i.e.* lasted) four hundred and thirty years." "Who dwelt in Egypt" is the extension of the subject—a descriptive clause introduced in order to establish the identity of the people in question.

The *duration* of the sojournings being ascertained from this text, the *locality* of them must be sought for in other parts of the Word of God. In Ex. vi. 4 (where we note with real thankfulness the improved reading of the R.V.) God says to Moses: "And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, THE LAND OF THEIR SOJOURNINGS, WHEREIN THEY SOJOURNED." To this agree the words of Heb. xi. 9: "By faith he (Abraham) SOJOURNED IN THE LAND OF THE PROMISE, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." The people, therefore, sojourned in the land of Canaan, and dwelt in the land of Egypt; and the whole time passed by them as strangers in the two countries was four hundred and thirty years.

The LXX. have sought to explain Ex. xii. 40 by adding to the clause "who dwelt in the land of Egypt," the words *kai en gē Chanaan* ("and in the land of Canaan"). This is the reading of the Vatican MS.; but another copy contains the still further addition: *autoi kai*

*hoi pateres autōn* ("they and their fathers"), which proves that the Septuagint translators interpreted the text in the very way that I propose.

Indeed the English reader who is careful about such matters might find it a help to his memory to enter, as an explanatory note, in the margin of his Bible, the following rendering of the LXX. of Ex. xii. 40:—"The sojourning of the children of Israel and of their fathers, in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years."

GEN. XV. 13; ACTS VII. 6. The four hundred years mentioned in these two scriptures concern ABRAHAM'S SEED, and count from the birth of Isaac. "In Isaac shall *thy seed* be called." Gen. xxi. 12; Rom. ix. 7; Heb. xi. 18.

Now "Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him" (Gen. xxi. 5). Again (Gen. xii. 4), "he was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran" (which, by the way, ought to be spelt, in English, "Charan," to distinguish it, as in Hebrew, from the man's name "Haran"). We are therefore obliged to conclude that Jehovah caused him to go forth out of Ur of the Chaldees five years before the latter date. The thirty years which represent the difference between our two figures are evidently to be accounted for as follows:—

From the giving of the promise to the giving of the law was	430 years.
Abraham's sojourn in Canaan until Isaac's birth ( <i>i.e.</i> between the age of 75 and 100 years),	25 "
	405 years
Leaving 5 years which we are forced to accept as the duration of his sojourn in Charan,	5 "
	400 years

There remain between the birth of Isaac and the Exodus, a period which, bearing in mind the scriptures quoted, we might entitle, "The sojourning of Abraham's seed."

How clear was the eye of the Lord as to the joy that was set before Him! How soon we shall be with Him, to know more about His sufferings and glory!

## ARE WE "FILLED"?

IT is both interesting and profitable to notice Paul's statements concerning the saints of his day. They suggest the questions, Can this be said of the saints to-day? and, if not, why not? In writing to the saints in Rome, he said, "I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." Paul would not have made this statement unless fully assured of its truth. We may, therefore, take it as a fact that these Roman saints were thus filled with goodness and knowledge. He was not addressing a select few who had so distinguished themselves as to be placed in the front rank, but the whole body of believers indicated in chap. i. 7.

As a result of being filled, they were able to admonish one another. There is again no hint of a few being set apart for this work of admonition; but, all being filled, and therefore fitted for the work, each was permitted and expected to do it.

Is this the condition of things to-day? First, look around and see in how many companies of Christians there is this liberty to admonish one another. Much more frequently is one set apart, and authorised by men to undertake it, while the rest are expected to submit. Is this God's arrangement, or man's attempted improvement upon it?

Then look at the assemblies where liberty is given for the Spirit of the Lord to speak by whom He will. How many, even there, are sufficiently filled with goodness and knowledge to be able? Heart and head must be filled. Knowledge is given to those who wait upon the Lord, hearkening to the voice of His word. The fruit of the Spirit includes goodness. How is it so few in God's assemblies are filled? Why do most of His saints remain silent, and look always to some two or three to give the word of admonition, or exhortation, or instruction? Not that all are to have the same office and do the same work; but is there not lacking, the desire for that fulness which would make them ready for every good word and work. There is too much satisfaction in being able to *receive* "a good word" from brother so-and-so, instead of a longing to be

the Lord's instrument in the edification of His Church. There is often more looking to a certain brother present for a word than to the Head of the Church, to whom all eyes should be directed. "Give ye them to eat," said the Master, and the disciples put what they had into His hand, and He gave them back enough for the multitude. The Lord makes His saints mutually dependent, not revealing everything to one, that "another sitting by" may be found necessary also. Therefore, "ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn."

How much more would a young convert be helped if all the saints with whom he was brought into fellowship were "filled"? When Christ had given life to the maid, He "commanded that something should be given her to eat." He might have given her that as He had given her life, but He gave the task to those around her; and each older saint ought to feel responsible to "give something to eat" to the younger.

Being filled does not always necessitate public ministry; but it implies being ready at all times for every opportunity. Nor is it merely knowledge stored up; for the power of the living God is needed to make even the Word itself effectual. Fellowship with the living God, communion with His thoughts, oneness with His mind, is what should be sought above all else. This would lead to having the mind stored with His Word, the heart set upon carrying it out; and out of the abundance, the overflowing fulness, of the heart the mouth would speak.

It is a dishonour to our Father that so many seem to exist upon scraps that may be given them instead of feasting with Him at the royal table. "Why art thou, being a king's son, lean from day to day?" Where there should be the flush of health and buoyant energy of "life more abundant," there is too often the wanness and weakness of disease. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" is a command; disobedience to which is a cause of errors on every hand. Without an intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures it is impossible to discern when they are being wrested from the Spirit's meaning.

It is an unhappy indication of the condition of things that the preaching or teaching meeting

is now so much more largely attended than the Bible-reading. There is much more readiness to receive instruction ready prepared, and presented in an attractive form, than to assist in searching it out. "The Bible-reading is not profitable," is sometimes heard; but if the hearts and minds of the saints were stored and enlightened with the letter and spirit of the Word, it would be found most profitable. There is less room for error to be introduced or accepted where every statement may be questioned and tested by the hearers. Let each one in the assembly where want of profit is complained of spend the intervening week in reading, studying, meditating upon the portion likely to be considered on the next occasion, having all the time an opened ear towards the Lord for His teaching upon each point. *If, after that, all be found assembled at the appointed time, that Bible-reading will not be found unprofitable. Nor will it be loss to spend so long upon one portion. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and [therefore] in His law doth he meditate day and night."*

Receiving much from Christ, and feeding richly upon it, gives vigour of life and abundance to distribute. But it must come from the Master. Otherwise it will not nourish. "What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light." Then the words spoken will not have to be forced, nor seem to petrify on the lip, so that there are only stones for those who are seeking bread. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge . . . for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. ii. 7).  
M. M. A.

**OUR SUFFICIENCY.**—Let us never forget the all-sufficiency of the *grace* of God—"My grace is sufficient for thee"; the all-sufficiency of the *word* of God—"All Scripture is given . . . that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; the all-sufficiency of the *Spirit* of God—"He shall guide you into all truth," "bring all things to your remembrance," &c. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

HEAVENLY fellowship brings its heaven with it.

## PAUL'S ADVERSARIES.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON I COR., BY J. R. C.

"A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries"—I Cor. xvi. 9.

IN the previous chapter (verse 32), we read of the apostle having "fought with beasts at Ephesus." Now he determines to "tarry" there, notwithstanding the "many adversaries," because he discerns that the Lord has opened the door for him.

If God opens a door, we may be perfectly sure that Satan will oppose, and the greater and more effectual the Divine opening, the more bitter and subtle will be the opposition. When Satan raises up adversaries, instead of being cast down we should rejoice, knowing that the very bitterness of his opposition is an indication that God is working in power.

Paul did not consider that the "many adversaries" afforded any good reason for his drawing back or slackening in testimony; it rather stimulated him to carry on the Divine warfare with greater vigour, assured that in the end the purposes of God would be accomplished.

I wonder what would become of us now, if, as in other times, we were in danger of being dragged to the stake and burnt for confessing Christ.

I doubt not that God gives special grace for special times of trial: burning grace for burning days, and dying grace for dying hours. Nevertheless, we cannot but fear that much of the cheap confession that is now maintained would fail before the first breath of persecution. It is well for us to test our own hearts, and ask ourselves, How much are we prepared to suffer for the testimony of our Lord? But in these days there is comparatively little of the open opposition of the adversary. In his character of the "roaring lion," openly terrifying and devouring the feeble witnesses for the Lord, he is rarely seen; but his opposition is not one whit the less real and effectual.

It was by subtlety that the serpent beguiled Eve; it was as an angel of light, and by employing those who professed to be ministers of righteousness, that he wrought havoc in the church at Corinth. And who can tell how the

testimony to the world of the church at Corinth was in this way marred and hindered. Instead of the Gospel sounding out *from* them, as at Thessalonica, it had to be declared over again *to* them!

And I have known assemblies, in connection with which months and years have passed without a Gospel testimony being publicly raised, where once the testimony was bright and effectual and blessed.

What wrought the change? Not open persecution—in all likelihood that would not have succeeded—but internal roots of bitterness and unjudged sin. Thus does Satan still oppose, and, alas, too often succeed.

Another line of opposition is the undermining of the foundations of Christian doctrine. What Gospel testimony can there be, where the doctrine of annihilation is substituted for the Scripture doctrine of the everlasting punishment of the unbelieving; where the universal fatherhood of God is substituted for the teaching of the Word of God, "Ye are of your father the devil," "Ye must be born again," "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" where atonement, by shedding of blood, is denied, and self-sacrifice, after the example of Christ, proclaimed as the way to God? These doctrines, and others kindred to them, are now being received and taught in hundreds of places, where, but a short time ago, the grand old truths of ruin, redemption, and regeneration were fully preached.

Never was Satan's opposition to the truth of God more virulent than now, and never were the energies of the Spirit of God more abundantly put forth. Every day is a Pentecost of grace, and every day an Armageddon of the powers of darkness.

"Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: let no man therefore despise him," &c. Timothy was a comparatively young man, and again and again allusion is found to the tendency, natural to us all, to despise the younger ones who are seeking to serve the Lord. Sometimes, indeed, this may be owing to indiscretion, unseemly forwardness, ignorance, pride, and so on.

Elsewhere Timothy is exhorted, "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Tim. iv. 12); but

if there had been a tendency so to look down upon him, and to set aside his teaching, how was he to meet it? Was it by self-assertion, and by waxing louder and more forward and more dogmatic? Let Scripture answer: "But be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." This is the Divine way to secure respect.

But there is undoubtedly a danger of a latent antagonism developing between elder ones and younger ones, and the best cure for it is for the elder ones to lead on, help, and encourage, lovingly and discreetly, those younger ones in whom grace and gift can be discerned.

In the days of Rehoboam, the division in heart between the old men and the young men was such, that, instead of blending their counsel together, the old men gave one counsel and the young men just the opposite.

It is sad indeed when this spirit is allowed to develop. We need the experience and caution of the aged, and we need the vigour and fire of the young. It is our wisdom to seek in all our ways to be helpers one to another. Beautiful, indeed, is the solicitude of Paul for his son Timothy, that his youth should not be a hindrance to the fruitfulness of his ministry.

#### CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

"I have declared my ways, and Thou heardest me" (Psalm cxix. 26).

WHAT a beautiful description of the simplicity of the believer's walk with God. He spreads his whole case before Him; declaring his ways of conduct with filial confidence, his ways of difficulty with holy friendship, his ways of sinfulness with deep contrition. It is his delight to acquaint God with all his undertakings, to tell Him all his distresses, that he may be guided by His counsel, confirmed by His strength, and delivered by His power. Every child of God, in the same spirit of ingenuous confession, can testify of the more than parental tenderness with which he is heard, and his "transgression is forgiven and his sin is covered." Thus he gains confidence, and pleads that God would teach him to know more of Himself. W. G. S.



## THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

THIS book is little read, and less understood, in its typical and prophetic import.

For many years I pored over it without being satisfied in my mind as to what the leading truths taught by it meant; but some twelve years ago I found in a Jewish commentary what appeared to me to be its true signification; unpalatable, perhaps, to Gentile Christianity, but valuable to those who want to know the mind of Christ on every subject, and not to follow the vaticinations of their own carnal intellects.

Jehosaphat Ben Ezra, in his book entitled "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty," writes as follows:—"The time shall come when King Ahasuerus shall remember Vashti, and what she hath done, and what was decreed against her (Esther ii. 1). The time shall come in which his heart shall move towards his former spouse, whom he so much loved, and whom he put away from him for righteous reasons. When taking pity on her hardships, and softened by her tears, and satisfied with her great and most sorrowful repentance, he shall call her once more to himself, and shall reinstate her in all her honours, and clothe her with greater glory than she was possessed of before her misfortunes." That the above is the true teaching of the book of Esther, the following extract from the synopsis of the books of the Bible, by J. N. Darby, seems confirmatory. It is as follows:—"In the book of Esther, the Gentile wife is set aside on account of her disobedience and her having failed in displaying her beauty to the world, and she is succeeded by a Jewish wife who possesses the king's affections. We see the audacious power of Haman, the Gentile, the oppressor of the Jews, destroyed, and Mordecai, the Jew, the protector of Esther, formerly despised and disgraced, raised to glory and honour, in place of the Gentile; all this, be it remembered, is in connection with the earth." Thus we have the concurrent testimony of two witnesses, a Jew and a Gentile, for the establishment of the interpretation, and which also agrees with the witness of the Spirit in the Apocalypse, concerning the final lukewarm state of the Laodicean church, which causes its utter rejection by Almighty God.

I also understand Haman and his ten sons to be types of Antichrist and the ten kings of the Roman earth; his "sitting in the temple of God" to be foreshadowed by the approach of Haman to the couch of Queen Esther (see chap. vii. 8); and his utter destruction, as also that of his sons, as the judgment justly due to his daring audacity. With these leading thoughts as a skeleton key, the whole import of the book will become manifest to the impartial and prayerful reader,

W. G.

## THE EARTHLY RELATIONS OF THE HEAVENLY FAMILY.

(Second Paper.)

JESUS in resurrection is set up as the Head of the new order of things, in which nothing below the righteousness of God is taken as a rule. As united with Him, we are made the righteousness of God, and therefore become fitly subject unto it. "Be ye holy, for I am holy."—"Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It is introduction into this order which really delivers out of this present evil world—answering the thing for which Jesus gave Himself for the Church, according to the will of the Father. But having been taken out of the world, they are again sent into it. "As thou hast sent Me into the world, even so also have I sent them into the world." It is therefore as risen that we are sent into world; and even the natural relations which we are called upon to sustain, we are not to sustain as natural, but having been freed from all by union with Christ, to show our deliverance in those very things, by subjection in them as unto the Lord. The realising the end of the flesh in the cross, and the glory to be manifested in the Church, will effectually hinder either assumption on the one hand, or insubjection on the other. And these very relationships become the occasion of exhibiting the manifold grace of God. We are naturally *born into the world*. By regeneration we are taken out of it, and then sent into it, so that the world itself becomes an entirely new scene, and our end in it to show the exceeding value and blessedness of God's own order. For if knowing in its full extent its constitution, that it is the place of death, sorrow, crying, and pain, we are still able to triumph over it, and to pass harmlessly through it; surely men seeing our good works, will glorify our Father which is in heaven. *In the world*, not of the world. How hard indeed practically to exhibit this truth, and to show forth, that whilst risen out of all fleshly distinctions, we yet do own them, not as those who are subject to them, but as those whose place is subjection to the Lord in everything.

It is in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians that we find the relative duties

most minutely laid down; and it is in these epistles that we find the glory of the Church, as associated with its risen Head, most minutely set before us. How suitable is this! for we should naturally have thought that there was something incongruous between such glory and things so homely. But it is in this that the power and wisdom of God are rendered so manifest. It is His ability alone to bring down the largest principles of His own blessed rule to the most minute circumstances. How marvellous that the same regulating power which is to introduce the ultimate blessing, and bring glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and God's complacency in men, is capable of adaptation to the ordering of a family. The realising this would be the means of taking away that which is so constantly irritating the minds of Christians, and lead to much more of that which is ornamental in the sight of God,—a meek and quiet spirit. It would greatly tend to distinguish between real spirituality and the mere excitement of the flesh. In looking more particularly into these details, we shall find, first, a general principle laid down; secondly, the party in subjection is first and most largely addressed with special suitable promises of reward; thirdly, that the party in authority is addressed, rather in the way of warning.

In Ephesians v. we have first some general rules, as "Walk circumspectly"—"Understanding what the will of the Lord is"—"Be filled with the Spirit"; and all this brought practically out in the general principle, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Christian circumspection is contained in understanding the will of the Lord, and acting, not under any excitement, but by being filled with the Spirit. The place of submission is the place of blessing, because it is the place of the Church. "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord," as the Church submits unto Christ (verse 24). The natural order, or rather disorder, taught subjection (for in the beginning it was not so); "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband (subject to thy husband), and he shall rule over thee." And this order we see

pervading; for it runs its course, a painful memento of sin; but in Christ Jesus, the authority is changed from rule to Headship; and subjection, instead of being the memorial of sin, leading to fretfulness and impatience, becomes associated in the soul with redemption, and all the intimacy of union subsisting between Christ and the Church. He is Head to the Church, and associates the Church with Himself in rule, at the same time that it acknowledges Him as its Lord, and gives Him His rightful honour. Thy desire shall be subject unto the Lord, and thus to thy husband. As it is written, "Submit yourselves (or be subject) to your own husbands, as unto the Lord." And how blessedly and in strict keeping with this is the exercise of the authority of the husband. Christ is the Saviour of the body, unto which He is Head, and over which He exercises authority; therefore it is—"Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; . . . so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." It is thus that both authority and subjection are placed upon a new basis, even that of love and mutual interest; and the very nearest of earthly relationships made a school of Christ and an opportunity of serving Him. Thus it is said to husbands, "Dwell with them *according to knowledge*, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." The very basis of the direction is the *knowledge* of the love of Christ to the Church, the comeliness and honour which He puts upon it, the common inheritance of life and glory to the Church with Himself, "heirs together with Christ."

With respect to the next relation of subjection, that of children to their parents, we have the direction, "Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*; for this is *right*." Disobedience to parents is marked as one feature of Gentile corruption (Rom. i. 30), and also of Christian apostasy (2 Tim. iii. 2). But how may we draw the line between disobedience to parents, and "Whoso loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me?" The acting on the latter injunction might appear to involve the sin specified. Here we immediately discover that we could not act on the natural

order, which would make the obedience depend on convenience or interest; and so long as it was convenient, obedience would be rendered, but it would cease when it was attended with trouble or expense; this was the way it acted during the time of the Lord's personal ministry: "Ye say, it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father and mother." The will of God being ascertained is that which alone can guide us through the difficulty.

The obedience claimed from children to their parents is "in the Lord: for this is right." Here is both the sanction and the limit. It is not right (or righteous) for a child to render obedience to a parent in an act which would be sin against the Lord. In such a case, father and mother must be forsaken for the Lord's sake; for the new relationship with Him is both higher and nearer than any of those which we have as men. And God never requires obedience in the lower relationships which would be disobedience to Himself; neither has He given authority to any relationship to be set up against His own. If subjection be not subjection to God, it must be either from interest or self-will, and both these are to be denied in order to follow Christ. But wherever obedience to a parent can be rendered by a child without involving disobedience to God, even though it be in that which is vexatious and capricious, there is the place of service for a child. "Children, obey your parents *in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*"

The one in this world who pleased God was an obedient child—confidence in His love, wisdom, and power, and unhesitating submission flowing from it. "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." And how fully He maintained this relationship, even in His subordinate character, was shown in His early life, as well as exhibiting the needful limit in every earthly relationship, that it must be subjection to the will of God. "His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? And they understood not the

saying which He spake unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." The value of that in the sight of God which was shown in the law, by having a special promise attached to it (Eph. v. 1), was thus also shown in the example which Jesus has left us to follow—obedience to the will of God in everything. It is thus especially that these relationships become occasions of service to the Lord: there will be always perplexities in carrying them out, and cases of conscience arising, till we clearly recognise, as the principle of action, "I must be about my (heavenly) Father's business." The word to parents is that of admonition, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:" thus throwing them on the recognition of God's holy discipline with themselves as His children, as their only ability rightly to train their children. If the husband was to learn the exercise of authority from the manner of the exercise of authority by Christ towards the Church, the parents were to learn the exercise of their authority towards their children by the holy discipline of their heavenly Father towards themselves.

---

**"Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."**—Matt. viii. 17.

IN seasons of sickness the believer often learns a new lesson of obedience. The praise of man, that so often follows our corrupt service, generally leaves us in the sick chamber; and, in the failure of all else, we taste His faithfulness who "makes our bed in sickness." Earthly things then shrink to their true proportions. We may have been cumbered with much serving, and are now to learn to be passive in our Father's hand. We may have been overrating our service, and are met by the admonition that we are not only to *do*, but to *suffer*. We may have been hasting in a wrong direction, and sickness is sent to arrest us. God will teach us more of His mind, and draws us into retirement to sit at the feet of Jesus.

W. G. S.

## Correspondence.

## A LETTER FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

British Columbia, *March 9th, 1890.*

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I wrote you last from San Francisco, in the month of November. Four weeks ago, Mrs. M. and I left that city and returned to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. Brother Goodfellow and I laboured together for about ten weeks in San Francisco, holding nightly meetings in the Gospel Hall, 826 Howard Street, a nice large room in a central locality, and used now by the assembly for their regular meetings. The week-night meetings were at first poorly attended, but steadily increased, while on Lord's days, the hall was usually well filled, and our open-air services were most encouraging. Unlike New York, Boston, and other large American cities, no "permit" is necessary to preach in the open air. We were greatly cheered in being privileged to see large numbers of men standing for a length of time listening attentively to the proclamation of "the old, old story," within a few yards of the principal business thoroughfare of the city. Our open-air audiences were largely composed of young men, of whom there are sixty-five thousand between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five in San Francisco. Many nationalities were represented, including Spaniards, Cubans, Italians, French, Germans, Scandinavians, Chinese, and Japanese. The local brethren, I am glad to learn, continue the open-air services two nights a week. Though I cannot report crowded meetings and numerous conversions as the result of our efforts, the Lord encouraged us by giving to us the joy of seeing a number profess to accept of God's great salvation, some of whom have been received into fellowship with Christians who gather to the precious Name. We likewise had a fortnight's Bible readings, in which we sought to help God's dear people on in the ways of Christ. On leaving San Francisco, brother Goodfellow and I went to Santa Cruz, a beautiful watering-place, about eighty miles south of San Francisco, where there is a little company who meet solely in the Lord's name. After remaining there a few days, I returned north, leaving brother Goodfellow to continue the meetings. San Francisco is a remarkable city. Forty years ago it was a Mexican village, and now it is a great commercial centre, with an estimated population of 330,000 souls; of this number over eighty per cent. are foreigners, who themselves or their parents were born outside of the United States. Among its mixed and multifarious nationalities, there are thousands of Japanese. I had a most interesting conversation with a young "Jap" in the Gospel Hall, at the close of one of our meetings. Professing to be saved, and giving Scripture for it, I asked what denomination he belonged to. He immediately replied, "Me no believe in denominations; me a disciple of Jesus." I could not help wishing that all God's people were of the same mind. He informed us that six other Japanese youths joined with him every week-night, after business hours, in studying the Scriptures together. The Chinese are much better represented than the Japanese; the estimated population of "Chinatown" being 40,000. "Chinatown" is the

name given to the Chinese quarters in the cities, on the Pacific coast. It is a most interesting sight to take a walk through "Chinatown," although the olfactory organs are usually greeted with unsavoury odours. Several of us were conducted through "Chinatown," late one night, by an experienced guide. Gambling dens were in full operation; but it is difficult for the police to apprehend the culprits, as there is always a man watching without, and another within, to give the alarm if any of the officers appear. The opium dens were packed with people in their little bunks, occupied in smoking the deadly drug. It saddened us to see the number of victims of this fascinating vice. We visited several of their "Joss" houses, or temples, and saw the various gods which they profess to fear, if not worship. The Chinese New-year opened when we were there. This is a great event to John Chinaman. Debts are paid at the end of each year. Rather than begin the New-year in debt, a Chinaman will sell his furniture, beg, borrow, or steal. The year must be "rounded," else they fear that the *wicked devils* will hurt them. At the "Joss" houses lights were kept burning, and also in dwelling-houses, to keep the evil spirits away. Fire-crackers were discharged with a deafening noise for the same purpose. Stores and houses were gaily decked with flags and bunting, and lanterns were seen on all hands. The Chinese on the Pacific coast, are, as a rule, an industrious, inoffensive, hard-working class of people. This is a great field for young men who have the desire to work at their trades, or occupations, and at the same time serve the Lord, in using their leisure hours in working among the Japanese or Chinese. The way the Chinese have been treated by Americans and Canadians, is not much calculated to raise Christianity in their estimation. A poll-tax of fifty dollars (£10) per head is imposed on every Chinaman—that lands on the continent. American workmen look upon Chinese labour with great jealousy. The Chinese can live on so much less than Americans or Britishers; and their advent to the continent is considered by many a curse. Notices like the following are often seen—"None but white labour employed." It is a serious problem, this question of Chinese immigration, and wise heads are needed at Washington and Ottawa to direct and guide in such a delicate and difficult subject. Japanese immigration is not restricted, and no poll-tax is levied. They conform to the customs of the country, dress like Americans, buy, sell, and trade as others; a Chinaman, on the other hand, does not consider himself an American or Canadian citizen, will not conform to the customs of the people, and proclaims by his dress, habits, and speech, that he is a "pilgrim and a stranger," piling up his treasures in China, whither he hopes to follow as soon as he can. What a lesson for those who profess to be citizens of heaven! The Chinese Emperor has passed an edict, expelling all Americans from China, on account of their treatment of his subjects, and, though the edict has not yet been enforced, it is likely to cause serious complications and trouble. San Francisco is the most openly wicked and ungodly city for its size on this continent; murder is very common, and few of the murderers are hanged. According to a recent editorial in the *Examiner*, one of the leading newspapers of the city, between December 1888 and February 1890, "at least eighty persons have

been killed in San Francisco, and the first man hanged, on account of any of them, was the wretched Chinaman who perished yesterday." "No wonder," says the editor; "the thing to do now is to see whether the law in San Francisco is strong enough to reach the white men of means and position, who go up behind other white men and shoot them in the back." From the annual report of the Y. M. C. A., for 1889, there are in San Francisco 129 licensed theatres, concert halls, and play-houses. Out of a population of 65,000 *young men*, on Sunday evening, August 19th, 1888, there were by actual count, in all the Protestant churches of the city, only 1892. On the following Sunday evening, at the principal theatres, concert halls, play-houses, saloons, and other places of amusement, including a baseball match, there were 17,933 young men, and there were, at least, 3000 houses of shame, which could not be reached and counted by the committee that evening, where young men were congregated, and averaging them at five young men in each, with the result that, in all such places on that evening, there were at least 32,933 young men. Multitudes of young men are dragged down through this maelstrom of iniquity, whilst many religious professors, it is to be feared, leave their "religion" on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains.

Victoria is a contrast to San Francisco. *Indifference* to the things of God and eternity may be said to characterise Western American cities, whilst in most of the Canadian centres of population, formal, outward religion is the barrier to the spread of the Gospel. In the new towns and cities there are innumerable sects, who emulate each other in the erection of handsome churches, and, with the large salaries paid to the ministers, choir leaders, &c., "members" are eagerly sought, and in many cases "candidates" are not asked *when, where, or how* they were "born again," or, for that part of it, if they are "born again" at all. Hence the open opposition and intense antagonism to preachers of the Gospel who labour on Scripture lines. Evangelists who work on "union" or "Y. M. C. A." lines, not acting out the "commission" of our Lord, as contained in Matthew xxviii. 18-20; who advise young converts to go where they please, or where they are "best fed," will obtain the co-operation of the various sects. Those servants of Christ, who believe that the "commission" is still binding, making disciples, baptising them, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever the Lord has commanded, and who are determined at *all costs* to be faithful to their "marching orders," may expect comparatively small meetings and the determined and persistent opposition of religious leaders, whose interest it is to maintain and uphold sectarian institutions.

An evangelist, professedly in fellowship with Christians who gather to the Name, in England, recently visited a Canadian city, in which for a number of years there has been a small assembly. This evangelist was announced as the "Reverend" So-and-so, preached in the Baptist chapel, and conducted meetings there, but passed by the little assembly, who were seeking, in face of much opposition, to act out principles which he professed to hold.

But I must draw this long letter to a close. The meetings here have been fairly well attended, and a few have professed conversion. I hope to visit and

have some meetings in Nanaimo, Vancouver, New Westminster, and then purpose, if the Lord will, to "spy the land in the flourishing Washington cities of Seattle and Tacoma, on Puget Sound, and on to Portland, Oregon, on my way to San Francisco. It is not yet clear whether I shall be able to return to Scotland in time for summer's Gospel work or not. I shall be glad of your prayers and the prayers of fellow-Christians. I trust the saints in Glasgow, who gather to the Name of the Lord, are united in heart and soul, continuing "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."—Yours affectionately in Him who changeth not,

ALEXANDER MARSHALL.  
c/o Mr. James Elsworth, 61 King's Road, Victoria.

#### A LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND.

Kaponga, Taranaki,  
16th February, 1890.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—Having been a reader of the *Witness*, I have been exercised about answering some of the questions asked; but owing to the time it would take for an answer to reach you, have never yet done so. I believe there are more in New Zealand who are hindered for the same reason, but, I suppose, there is no way of getting over the difficulty. I have just received the December number, and shall, by God's help, endeavour to answer two questions (see Questions and Answers). We (that is my wife and I), live in a newly-settled district about twelve miles from the nearest gathering in fellowship, and very seldom get the personal ministration of other brethren; but the Lord is good and makes it up to us in other ways. There has been a good deal of blessing on this island during the past eighteen months, in restoration of assemblies that had got broken up. Most of us are young in the faith. Gospel work still goes on with blessing in different places. Not, indeed, as it was a few years ago, when whole districts were moved and many saved; now it is one or two in a place. The simple Gospel has been so fully preached, that you scarcely meet any who have not heard it; but, alas, they are only few who have received Christ into their hearts by faith. The correspondence by "G. A." in last *Witness* we say Amen to. We hear of worldliness on all sides and feel it in ourselves. We want to remember what portion He has still got who said, "Ye are not of this world, as I am not of this world." With Christian love,—  
Yours in Christ Jesus, G. J. M.

#### SUMMER WORK AMONGST THE VILLAGES.

IF the Lord permit, we hope to begin our summer holiday work among the villages about the middle of June. The *Island of Arran*, in Scotland, and *part of Yorkshire*, in England, have been suggested as needy and accessible fields of labour. If a sufficient number of workers go forth, both of these needy parts might be reached. Young men and others able to spend a few days in this happy work are invited to correspond with us, stating when and for how long they may be able to go. Further particulars next month.

Letters may be addressed to John Ritchie, Alma Cottage, Kilmarnock.

## 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:—

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John i. 9). Does not this text imply that the believer needs to be forgiven again and again, and that conditionally upon his confessing his sins as they occur? If so, how is it reconciled with passages implying that forgiveness was imparted once for all at conversion? (See Col. ii. 13, iii. 13; Eph. iv. 32.)

Please explain 2 Thess. ii. 1.

Is it scriptural to say that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God from all eternity?

Matt. xix. 24, 25.—Please distinguish between “the kingdom of the heavens” and “the kingdom of God”; also between the kingdom of “our Lord” and “His Christ” (Rev. xi. 15).

Is there any scriptural warrant for the assertion, made by many students of prophecy, that the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt?

What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for *introducing* those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them?

Could any reader explain the meaning of 1 John iv. 17, last clause, “Because as He is, so are we in this world”?

### THE HOLY KISS.

(LATE ANSWER TO QUESTION 340, IN JANUARY *Witness*, PAGE 15).

In the East, kissing was the mode of salutation, as a grasp of the hand is among British-born subjects. The special significance and meaning to us lies not in the mode, but the spirit in which it is done. “Holy”

or “of love,” as begotten of God, in contrast to such salutation as Joab with Amasa, and Judas with Jesus. In each of these cases it might well be said, “His words were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart”: also “*one another*,” not special individuals, but as the exhortation is to all, so all one with another. If we have respect of persons, we commit sin.

NEW ZEALAND.

G. J. M.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO “STUDIES.”

(LATE ANSWER TO QUESTION 341, IN JANUARY *Witness*, PAGE 15).

It would be entirely wrong if it was simply for worldly position; but if as well, and firstly it was God's glory and the good of our fellowmen, then it would be right. If we are seeking this, we will always find time for study of God's Word. There are many ways by which we might rise to worldly position, but in which we could not glorify God, and which would be ruinous to our own souls and to others. Let each, then, ask himself or herself, Is this where God would have me, and can I glorify Him in this,

NEW ZEALAND.

G. J. M.

### JUDGING.

QUESTION 350.—What is the meaning of the precept, “Judge not that ye be not judged” (Matt. vii. 1)? and how can it be reconciled with the instruction of 1 Cor. v. 12, “Do not ye judge them that are within”?

**Ans. A.**—We are not to judge “the hidden things,” and “the counsels of the heart” (1 Cor. iv. 5)—that is, the *motives* of others; neither are we to judge one for not observing man's ordinances or Jewish observances (Col. ii. 16); there are also scriptures where we are forbidden to judge others as regards eating and drinking (Rom. xiv.), and generally, as regards their service (Rom. xiv. 4, and James iv. 11, 12), which will yet be judged by the Lord.

On the other hand, we are to judge the *deeds* of those who profess to be Christians (1 Cor. v. 11-13). The false charity which says (no matter how glaring the sin of those who call themselves Christians), “I am not to judge them,” finds no authority in the Word. Paul judges the fornicator of Corinth (1 Cor. v. 3); John judges Diotrephes (3 John 9); and Peter judges Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 3).

We are also to judge the *words* of professed teachers (1 Cor. x. 15); and, most important, we are to judge ourselves, not only as to words and deeds, but motives also (1 Cor. xi. 31).

F. W. F.

**Ans. B.**—In Matthew vii. the Lord is instructing His disciples as to the spirit and conduct which became them in their ordinary intercourse with each other. They were to be practically “the children of their Father which is in heaven”; to walk in grace, and not to allow themselves in a suspicious or censorious spirit. If we are “walking in love, as God's dear children,” we shall be glad to discern all the good we possibly can in our brother, and shall be slow to impute to him any unworthy motives. “Love thinketh no evil”; but

to make the injunction of our Lord in Matthew vii. an excuse for neglecting to judge positive and manifest evil in the assembly, such as 1 Cor. v. discloses, is to dishonour Him, and to play into the hands of the enemy. The cultivation of a spirit of grace and tenderness towards our brethren, so far from being inconsistent with the judgment of flagrant sin in the assembly, is in reality the only befitting spirit in which to deal with it.

True self-judgment will always make room for the exercise of grace towards others; but let us ever bear in mind, that "this is the love of God that we keep His commandments."

**Ans. C.**—In Matthew vii. 1 we have the injunction to refrain from unnecessary and uncalled-for judgments on things and persons. In 1 Cor. v. 12 we have the authority, as possessing the mind of the Lord, to judge questions arising in the church.

If Matthew vii. 1 is absolute as to all judgment, how could we fulfil such injunctions as the following:—"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good"; "I speak as unto wise men: judge ye"; "Take heed what ye hear"; "Beware of men"? But uncalled-for criticisms and judgments are tokens of a carnal and not a spiritual condition. A. O. M.

**Ans. D.**—The judgment referred to in Matt. vii. 1 is that according to the mind of the flesh. There is *no love* in it, nor any circumcision of heart as to the nature of sin. On the other hand, the spirit that prompts it is rather glad than otherwise to perceive failure in a brother, because thereby it finds occasion to excuse the beam in its own eye, and comforts itself as to its own sin, because others are as bad. It is also in pride; for it compares its own virtues with its brother's failure, and therefore is puffed up, taking pleasure in standing at a distance and visiting him with its sanctimonious censure, but with no sorrow for him in love. And since "what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," God will judge us if we indulge in it, that we may *learn ourselves*, and what sin really is. But 1 Cor. v. 12 is a very different thing; in fact, just the opposite. There the sin is confessed in sorrow by the assembly, because detected in a brother; all and each separating from the evil, separating from the very thing that pleases the flesh. Shame comes upon all because a brother has sinned, and all clear themselves of it. The sin has to go, in 1 Cor. v. 12; but in Matt. vii. 1, it may remain. And here is the difference; and where sin has to go, the work is a work of love. H. G. H.

**Ans. E.**—There is a great difference between judging *actions* and judging *motives*. The former we are bound to judge in one another, in faithfulness to the Lord; but the latter we dare not judge, though occasionally, alas, we are found doing it. The case in point in 1 Cor. v., is a question of *actions*. The whole thing was out like the leprosy in Lev. xiv. 8, and patent to the eyes of all, and nothing was left to the saints but to deal with the matter in the fear of God. That we are responsible to "judge them that are within," is

clearly taught in the chapter. But coming to the question of *motives*, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant; to his own master he standeth or falleth (Rom. xiv. 4). Human judgment in this respect is always at fault, because formed by the *outward appearance*, whereas, to form a correct judgment of motives, it is necessary to look at the *heart*; and who can do that but the Lord?

That there is a difference is clear from 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Paul tells the Corinthians, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you." The man who wrote chapter v. would not have said this had he *actions* before his mind. But the point was, that he was responsible to the Lord. He only had the right to judge His servant's motives. "He that judgeth me is the Lord," "Let us be slow to judge, remembering that with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." W. W. F.

**Ans. F.**—Matt. vii. 1. answers to Rom. xiv. A judging of another's motives, or judging that afflictions sent by the Lord are because of this or of that; a judgment to which we are not called, but which by nature we are ever prone to; a judgment after the sight of our eyes springs from the carnal heart: whether it be in a believer or an unbeliever its source is the same. Such was the judgment bestowed on the Apostle Paul by the Corinthians; while serving the Lord in love he was blamed for doing his service for base gain (see 2 Cor. xii.) Thus they judged his motive, which the Lord alone could do. Again, the same principle with Job and his friends. The Lord, for a trial of Job's faith and to bring out his self trust, suffered him to be buffeted by the enemy until the accomplishment of His purpose. But the friends of Job, in their folly and short-sightedness, put down his affliction as the judgment of the Lord because of sin indulged (see Book of Job). Heed taken to verses 2-4 of Matt. vii. is a safeguard against such an action.

**Editor's Note.**—To judge in the sense of "discerning" the true character of things is a function for which the "spiritual," and they only, are competent (see Heb. v. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15). It is by this "discernment" that the good is chosen and the evil refused. The thing that the Lord condemns is assuming to be judges in matters over which we have no jurisdiction and in which we have no authority to pronounce judgment. One such sphere is *motives*. God alone is judge here, and to impute evil motives is to contravene the distinct command of the Lord (see 1 Cor. iv. 2-5).

But to say that we may judge actions and not motives is to state only a partial truth. There are many actions which are right or wrong according to the motive that prompts and governs them, and of such actions we cannot form any judgment, and are not called to do so, but are bound to leave them to the Lord. A man may be seen to severely chastise his child. It may be an outburst of temper, or it may be with aching heart a much needed discipline. In 1 Cor. x. 27 one is supposed to be invited to a feast by an unbeliever. "If

he be disposed to go," the act may be right or it may be wrong, according to the motive. If he goes as the Lord's servant, shining amid the darkness, as did the Lord in similar circumstances, it is right. If to please self, and at the expense of hiding the light, it is wrong.

So with the path of the Lord's servant amid the perplexities of these days. It may be right for *one* to go where *another* could not. We are not constituted judges of one another in the path of service. Paul greatly desired Apollos to go to Corinth; but his will was not at all to come at this time (1 Cor. xvi. 12). Even an apostle had no dominion over the faith of a servant of God (2 Cor. i. 24). Paul does not judge Apollos; to his own Master he stands or falls.

How different this from the spirit now abroad that would not only judge, but even control the course of those who are bound to acknowledge only the authority of their Lord.

Another sphere is, *matters which God has left to individual conscience*; matters concerning which definite command is not given, but in which conduct must be guided by principles rather than by precepts. There is this difference between a principle and a precept: the latter is seen and can be accepted or rejected in an instant; the former may take years to learn, and we may not after all have any idea of how far it reaches in its application. Hence, if one who has a little more light than his neighbour, sets about judging, condemning, censuring, or separating from his neighbour instead of lovingly seeking to help him on, he is assuming a function that pertains not to him, and he inevitably suffers in his own soul at the same time that he wrongs and alienates his brother. Rom. xiv. is a chapter pointing out diverse lines of action which were not to be made matters of judgment, but matters of forbearance. The Master is the judge; not the fellow-servant. "Let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind." "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." "Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more." Eating and drinking and observance of days are mentioned, but the principle is of wider application, and includes everything concerning which God has not given definite commands.

Amid the abounding perplexities of these last and evil days, when the prayer of every true heart must be, "Send out Thy light and Thy truth," the hard, censorious spirit in which truth is uttered, is one of the most powerful means by which Satan is hindering its acceptance by the children of God.

Satan is never better served than when increase of knowledge sets a babe in grace upon the judgment seat, to condemn as untrue to their Lord those who see not yet what he discerns.

Thus truth, instead of being a light to lead on, becomes a barrier to hinder; instead of being a link to unite, it becomes a wedge to divide.

God has laid upon the assembly the responsibility of judging the actions and doctrines of the individuals of which it is composed. 1 Cor. v. indicates the class of evils that must not be tolerated, but judged. Fundamental error of doctrine is of the same nature. Gal. v. 9, 10, 1 Tim. i. 20, Rev. ii. 2, give the Lord's approval of such judgment, and verses 14, 15, the Lord's censure for unfaithfulness in allowing such to remain unjudged.

## SCRIPTURAL TYPES.

**QUESTION 351.**—What constitutes a type in Scripture; or, what may be legitimately designated a type?

**Ans. A.**—The word "type" only occurs once in the common version, and that as marginal reading of "ensamples" (1 Cor. x. 11). A Greek concordance shows that the word is variously rendered in our English translation by eight different words; for instance, in Titus, ii. 7, as "pattern." The mistake is ever to establish a doctrine from a type, thus marking the distinction between it and a parable. It, however, illustrates truth in a somewhat similar way. F. W. F.

**Ans. B.**—Read 1 Cor. x. 1-11, note margin in verse 11, also R. V. God has given us His former dealings with our predecessors, as pictures of His present dealings with us; they are types. (See also 1 Cor. xv. 45). The world has recognised this by its very common saying, "History repeats itself." O. B.

**Ans. C.**—As a leaden type prints the letter cut upon it, so a type of Scripture, as, for instance, Abraham, the father, offering up his only son, Isaac, clearly reprints or illustrates that which God designed it to do. We need to distinguish between types and symbols. A symbol is a figure or sign, illustrating a given point. Thus, the term, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," is a symbolic title of Christ, illustrating His character and origin. A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—It has been remarked that there are four different kinds of types in the Old Testament. 1st, Personal, such as Adam, Noah, Joseph, Jonah, &c.; 2nd, official, such as the priesthood, the kingship, the mediator, &c.; 3rd, historical, or typical events, such as the crossing of the Red Sea, the journeying in the wilderness, &c.; 4th, sacrificial types, including the offerings and all the ordinances of the sanctuary connected therewith.

That only is a type which was designed by God to represent, illustratively, future and spiritual things. Many are referred to in the New Testament, and some would limit the typical character of the Old Testament to those actually alluded to in the New. But we rather incline to believe that those given in the New are divinely-selected examples of how the Old Testament may be used to profit under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Just as the instances of faith, taken up in Heb. xi., are only specimens of faith, which he who reads the Old Testament records with anointed eye can discern much more abundantly.

One danger is that alluded to in answer A. Doctrine is found in the New Testament, and we do well to question and stand in doubt of doctrines that have no foundation except in Old Testament types. We know of no New Testament doctrine, however, that may not be profitably illustrated by the types of the Old. Another danger is of allowing imagination to run riot, and making it a sort of intellectual diversion to invent typical significations. Another danger is to use as a type and speak dogmatically of that which is merely an illustration. Great liberty must be allowed in the use of Scripture facts and incidents as illustrations; but a thing may be a helpful illustration that could on no account be acknowledged a divinely-constructed type.



## ON INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE.

BY THE EDITOR.

IT is written concerning the Lord Jesus that "He increased in wisdom and in stature" (Luke ii. 52). Doubtless this increase was as rapid as could be, consistently with the development proper to one purely and perfectly human.

But increase in wisdom with Him did not reveal faulty conduct or culpable ignorance in the past. All along, from the time that in perfectness of faith He rested as a babe on His mother's breast, He had at each daily stage learned all that He required to know in order to the perfect pleasing of His Father and God.

It is not so with man. He begins with a corrupt nature, with a determined bias toward evil, with antipathy to the will of God, and consequently acquires quickly the knowledge of evil, and slowly the knowledge of good.

Indeed, man has not the capacity truly to learn of God until he is born again, and partakes of a new nature which delights in the law of God.

Hence the first ray of Divine knowledge that enters the soul is like the first ray of light that shone into the darkness of creation; it reveals a scene of chaos and death.

The conflict then begins. The darkness struggles against the light, the death and corruption against the spiritual life and the incorruptible seed; the forces of confusion and disorder against the rule and ordering of God in the soul.

It is this condition, common to all, in a more or less intensified form, that makes the acquisition of the knowledge which is of God so slow and so painful.

Every particle of Divine knowledge which breaks in—as light into darkness—upon the ignorance of nature, reveals something in the past that was evil and that must be judged and cast out if the true light is to shine and the peace of God to rule within.

So long as ignorance holds sway, conscience is undisturbed. Conscience is only that which knowledge or ignorance makes it. There is a natural conscience, which all men possess, and which, according to the knowledge of right and wrong which is natural, which even the

heathen possess ("the work of the law written in their hearts"), cries out against the violation of natural laws. But there is a higher thing, a spiritual conscience which belongs only to the regenerate, and which takes cognisance not only of gross outward sins or immoralities, but which rises to a higher and higher standard of demand as the understanding becomes enlightened in the will of God and the mind of Christ.

Every particle of enlightenment, therefore, becomes a snare and a condemnation, unless it is yielded to practically according to the dictates of a spiritually enlightened and exercised conscience.

It is here that increase of knowledge so often fails to sanctify; on the contrary, so often proves a means of puffing up, an occasion of spiritual conceit bringing infallibly into the snare of the devil. Some decry knowledge. But it is not the knowledge which is at fault, but the deceitful heart that refuses to judge what the increased light discovers to be evil—or which embraces the new truth and even acts upon it, but fails to deal in repentance and confession with the past ways of ignorance.

The law of the sin-offering taught this most definitely. When it *came to the knowledge* of an Israelite that he had been, in his ignorance, walking contrary to the will of God, it was not enough that he alter his course. His future way, however conformed to the law, could never be acceptable to God until he had brought his sin-offering to Jehovah and obtained forgiveness for the sin of which he had been ignorantly guilty.

There be many in these days of *increased knowledge* (the last days, surely) who are seeing many things to be wrong which once they supposed to be right. Denominationalism, infant baptism, humanly ordained ministry, union of church and world, and much else is seen to be of the flesh, and as a result many are separating from all such and gathering together around the Lord, professedly owning His authority alone, His Word the only statute book, His Spirit the only guide. But the result in many cases seems to show that the new path has been entered upon with no adequate repentance over the years of previous ignorance and sin. Hence a proud, unbroken,

impatient spirit that contends for truth, but not in love; that judges and censures, but takes little pains to instruct and enlighten by line upon line and precept upon precept. The result is a going forward on the lines of increased knowledge after the fashion of the block system of railway signalling, by which every mile of advance by one train becomes a block to separate it from the one behind—rather than the advance of a stream, which draws all from the far-off source in uninterrupted continuity after it.

Alas, when increase of knowledge lifts its possessor up on to a platform of separation from all who have not attained to his latest advance.

It is well to grow in knowledge, especially in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and oneness of mind is a most precious attainment, ever to be sought after; but when oneness of mind can only be attained by narrowing the circle to those who, apart from the measure of grace and faith, have attained to a certain standard of knowledge, then the benefit is too dearly bought, and ere long it may be found that the fellowship surrendered had more of God in it than the fellowship attained.

There is a tendency on the part of some to treat principle lightly. To be ready for the sake of "fellowship" to go in paths that seriously compromise the truth. No greater evil can be done to a believer than to teach him by action, if not by word, that Divine principles are mere matters of opinion that can be set aside or not, according as self-will or convenience may demand. Better far to have doors shut against the truth than to have access on the ground of compromise.

But there are occasions when principles, though truly held, cannot be forced upon others who have not yet learned them.

There was a time when a mother, who loved her child, cried out to let the other have it, for the issue was the dividing sword. It was not that the mother's heart had wavered for an instant towards her offspring, but love was too true to endure the more dreadful issue. There are times when the forcing of principles upon others, which they do not see and against which they blindly contend, can only be carried out at the cost of violating every spiritual instinct; by separation, keen and ruth-

less as the sword, from those against whom no evil can be alleged but that they have "not attained."

It is as though the mother consented to divide the child rather than condone the injustice of letting the other have it. Oh, that brethren would learn that over all such scenes a greater than Solomon presides, and that—when rather than settle by the sword of division the true heart yields for the time and commits the matter to God—the "presiding Judge" will manifest the truth in His own time and way, and give the blessing to the spiritual affections that waited upon Him, which He denies to the callous truth-promoters who scruple not to sacrifice every Spirit-begotten instinct upon the altar of some particular dogma.

Some are more rapid learners than others. They see one sidé of a truth, and run ahead with it till a perpetual "block" is interposed between them and all who so far had followed on.

Others are slow learners. They look at all sides and all issues. They can only be helped in the Divine way of "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, here a little and there a little" (Isa. xxviii. 10).

Their ignorance may be to some extent sinful. They may shrink for a time from the appeal that they fear will go against them, and so they may almost be said to be "willingly ignorant." With such the greater grace is needed to "let patience have her perfect work." There will be more glory to God and blessing to souls in the love that patiently waits and bears till long-opposed truth has gained its hold and made its way, than in the zeal that accuses and abuses and separates from all who are slow to learn what to others seems so simple.

But still it is as it ever has been, poor, weak, one-sided man is separating truth and love, and in so doing is rending asunder all else that God has joined. One is crying "Love," and truth is kept back and compromised lest it should offend. Another is crying "Truth," and hammering away at the particular truth he has espoused till, as a wedge, it has split and separated those whom God had united.

## THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

THE question is asked, *Is it scriptural to say that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God from all eternity?*

The simplest reply is, Yes; and it would be very unscriptural to say anything different. But such an important question should not be dismissed so summarily, especially in a day like the present, when many who call themselves Christians are denying this great truth, and still more are ignoring it. Considering the kinds of doctrine that are around us on every hand, it is not surprising if some young disciples find perplexities, which will vanish before a fuller acquaintance with the Word of God.

This question involves the *Sonship* of Christ, His *Godhead*, and His *eternity*; but really these three are one, and cannot be considered separately. If He is the Son of God, as Scripture affirms, in a sense in which no creature ever can be a son of God, He must be God; and if He is God, He must be such from eternity. So full is Scripture on this subject that one knows not where to begin; and no wonder, for on the truth that Christ is verily the Son of God, and that this title expresses His high and holy relationship to the Father before a creature existed, everything else hangs.

The way in which Scripture always distinguishes between what the Lord was essentially, and what He became, is most marked. Thus, in Rom. i. 3, 4, Paul speaks of Him as the One "who *became* of the seed of David according to the flesh, and was *declared* to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." In 2 Cor. viii. 9, we are told that He who "was rich" for our sakes "*became poor*"; and in Phil. ii. 6, we read, "Who, being (*i.e.*, subsisting, or being essentially) in the form of God . . . emptied Himself, *taking upon Him* the form of a servant, and *becoming* in the likeness of men." Equally explicit is the language of prophecy: "Unto us a *Child is born*, unto us a *Son is given*;" and the One who is to come forth out of Bethlehem, and be ruler in Israel, is none other than He "whose goings forth have been from of old, *from everlasting*" (Isa. ix. 6; Mic. v. 2).

It may be helpful to bring together a few of the many testimonies we have to the supreme divinity of the Lord, in the order in which they were given.

## I. "THE RECORD OF JOHN."

It was the special mission of this "prophet of the Highest" to "go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways," and it is written, "John beareth witness of Him (*i.e.* his witness still remains for all who will receive it), and hath cried, saying, This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: *for He was before me*" (John i. 15). Seeing that as to birth into this world John was the *senior*, this statement could only refer to the *pre-existence* of the One who followed him. And with this agree the words of that noble passage in which John contrasts himself, as "the friend of the Bridegroom," with the Bridegroom Himself: "*He that cometh from above is above all*: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: *He that cometh from heaven is above all . . . for He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.*"

## II. THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST HIMSELF.

The well-known statement, which is so simple to the newly-born soul and so profound to the advanced saint, is most clear: "God so loved the world, that *He gave His only begotten Son.*" God could neither send nor give what He did not possess, and if God had possessed no Son until that holy babe was born at Bethlehem, such words as these could not have been uttered. For, though it is true that John was "sent from God," it is very clear that the Lord speaks of Himself as sent in a very peculiar sense when He says, "*I proceeded forth and came from God*; neither came I of Myself, but *He sent Me*" (John viii. 42). Again He speaks of Himself as the One "whom the Father sanctified, and *sent into the world*" (John x. 36). This word *sent* is one of the great words of this gospel; the Lord uses it of Himself six times in chapter xvii. In His last address to His disciples, He said, "*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world*: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John xvi. 28). His

coming "from God" was as definite as His going "to God" (John xiii. 3).

It should further be noticed that the very way in which the Lord speaks of God as His Father, shows that He intended to express a relationship that was unique, and that involved equality. Look at His words as recorded in Matt. xi. 27, "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal Him." The word for *know* here expresses *full and complete knowledge*, and thus the Lord asserts that He has the same knowledge of the Father that the Father has of Him. Where shall we look for a more perfect expression of equality.

It is in His words as recorded by John that this peculiar relationship is most constantly set forth, and chapter v. 17, 18 should be specially noted. When the Jews persecuted the Lord for performing a miracle on the Sabbath-day, His defence was simply this: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Jews saw what He meant, and "sought the more to kill Him, because He . . . said also that God was *His own (idion) Father*, making Himself *equal with God*." This was how they understood His words, and if they had *misunderstood* He would have corrected them, instead of which He only confirmed their impression by His further teaching concerning Himself as *the Son*. When the Jews expressed surprise at His words concerning Abraham, His reply was, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham *was (i.e., was born), I am*." He uses a word of Abraham which signifies coming into existence, but the word which He uses of Himself denotes absolute being. "*Therefore they took up stones to cast at Him;*" that is, seeing clearly that He had used of Himself an expression that belongs to Godhead alone, they prepared to stone Him for blasphemy. And let it never be forgotten that this was the final ground of His condemnation by the Jewish Sanhedrim. Failing to obtain other evidence on which they could condemn Him, the high priest said, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Thus put upon His oath He is silent no longer, but affirms that He is what they say. But, that there may be no mistake, they drop the title Christ, and all

ask, "Art Thou then the Son of God." To this He fully assents, and is at once condemned as a blasphemer (see John xix. 7). Thus are we shut up to one of two conclusions: either He was *the Son of God*, in the unique and glorious sense in which that title can belong to no creature, or His condemnation was just; there is no salvation for a sinner; the sunshine of the revelation of God vanishes from this book and leaves nothing but the blackness of darkness.

But, blessed be God! He has justified all the words of His Holy One by raising Him from the dead with the salutation, "*Thou art My Son*"; and we again hear His own voice from the throne, as follows: "These things saith *the Son of God*, . . . all the churches shall know that *I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts*: and *I will give* unto every one of you according to your works" (Rev. ii. 18-23). We have only to compare this with Jer. xvii. 10, and we shall see that He asserts that He will do what Jehovah alone can do. Had he not been *essentially*, and therefore, of course, *eternally*, the Son of God, He could not even now speak thus, for no exaltation could make a *creature* divinite.

### III. THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL.

There was never a greater opponent of those who asserted the proper dignity of Him whom the Jews had condemned for blasphemy than Saul of Tarsus; but when once the Lord Jesus had revealed Himself to him, His essential divinity was so written upon the very heart of the former persecutor that the conviction of it shows itself in all his words and ways. The first notice of his ministry is in the words, "Straightway he preached *Jesus* in the synagogues that He is *the Son of God*." In the salutation of every Epistle he links Him with the Father as the equal source of grace and peace; and when he declares that He is of Israel *according to the flesh*, he adds, "Who is (*i.e., who is essentially*) over all, God blessed for ever." The same expression is used of the Father in 2 Cor. xi. 31.

Twice in Rom. viii., Paul writes "*His own Son*," and in Gal. iv. 4, he says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God *sent forth* His Son." The very same word is used in

verse 6, "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son"; and in each case it denotes the sending forth of one who was previously "with God." Reference was made at the beginning to three passages of Paul's writings, and, of the many that might be quoted, we will only notice the epistle to the Colossians. In chapter i. 15, he speaks of the Son as "the Image of the invisible God, the First-born (*i.e.*, Lord or Heir, see Heb. i. 2) of all creation: for *by* Him were all things created . . . all things were created *by* Him, and *for* Him: and He is *before* all things, and *by* Him all things consist." In chapter ii. 9, he says, "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; and whereas in Rom. i. 20, when he speaks of what may be known of God *in creation*, he uses a word which is "vagner, more abstract, and less personal," and is well rendered "*divinity*," here he uses a much fuller word to express the "essential and personal Godhead of the Son" (Trench's "Synonyms").

#### IV. THE TESTIMONY OF THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

He who was the *first* disciple of Christ (John i. 35) was the *last* to commit his written testimony to the church of God, for there can be little question that the gospel and the epistles of John were written after the apostle had for sixty years treasured up in his heart the memories of the earthly life of his Lord, and had been deeply taught by the Spirit the deep significance of His death and resurrection. We are all familiar with the opening words of his gospel, and feel their simplicity; but who has ever sounded their depths? "In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was with* God, and the Word *was* God." We have three distinct statements: the *essential existence* of the Word; His *distinctness* from the Father, while any thought of separation is excluded; and His *absolute Godhead*. The second of these statements is, for a special reason, repeated in verse 2.

The "beginning" of Gen. i. is defined by the context to be the *beginning of creation*, when "the worlds were framed by the Word of God." The "beginning" of which John speaks is a beginning that is beginningless. Trace out, if you can, "the beginning of His way" Who is "from everlasting"; go back to "the

beginning, or ever the earth was"; reflect on the time when there were no depths, when there were no fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills; when as yet God had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the first dust of the earth (Prov. viii.), and know that *then*, "in the beginning," the Word *was*. Before sun, moon, or stars were seen; before there existed any created eye to see them; before God had begun to manifest Himself in creation of any kind, *the Word was*. It is of this glorious One that he declares, "The Word *became* flesh" (verse 14). Here again we note the marked distinction between "*was*" and "*became*." He *was* God; He *became* flesh. He did not and could not cease to be what He *was*; but He *became* what hitherto He *was* not, and henceforth, whether in the depths of humiliation or the height of glory, He is ever before us the One who is both *God* and *Man*.

Consideration of space forbids our quoting further scriptures; but we may specially refer to John xii. 37-41; 1 John i., where contrast "*was*" (verse 1) and "*was manifested*" (verse 2); ii. 23.

It should also be observed that in John i. 6 the verb rendered *was* is quite distinct from that used in verse 1. In verse 1 it is the verb which expresses *absolute existence*; in verse 6 it is the word *to become*. "There *came* a man," or "There *arose* a man." The reference is to the fact that the one who had been with God in the desert came forth to the people, being sent by Him.

In conclusion, we would just remark that the titles of the Lord Jesus are all of deep significance. They declare what He is; they are so many rays of His glory. But amongst them the glorious title SON OF GOD must ever stand pre-eminent. All other titles are but unfoldings of this, and but for the essential glory that is expressed by this not one of them could exist. All other titles express some relation to the *creature*; this expresses an eternal and ineffable relation to *God*. The high title *the Word* brings Him before us as the One who *tells out* God; yet He could not have revealed God had not the creature existed to receive the revelation. But suppose no creature had ever been formed, could this have

affected His relationship to the Father as Son? Most surely not! It is a relationship that is above, and before, and independent of creation; and the glory of Him who fills it finds expression first in creation, but above all in redemption and in that new creation of which in resurrection He is both the Beginning and the Head.

W. H. B.

## THE WORD OF LIFE:

Its Relation to the Believer.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

"THE WORD OF LIFE" (1 John i. 3).

"The Word of Life" (Phil. ii. 16).

### IV. To exhibit its CONTROL over life.

THE headship and lordship of Christ were both obtained by like means; death and resurrection, and commenced at the same time. They are inseparably joined together; to loyally accept one is to receive both, or to reject one is to reject the other. Just as the head is fitted to rule the members of the natural body, so Christ is appointed to rule the individual members of His mystical body. He rules through the written Word; not through men, but His own precious truth. He claims implicit, unquestionable obedience to Himself, and in this obedience He has set us an example that we should follow His steps. From His earliest days on earth He fed upon the will of His God, and hence His words: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work." Though He were a Son, yet He took the place of a slave; though He Himself the *Living Word*, He perfectly obeyed the written Word; and though He were the living God in flesh, yet He embraced the office of a servant and became in all things obedient to the will of the Father. He is, therefore, our pattern, our model for an obedient life, a life controlled by the Word of God. We are not left in this trackless waste without a guide—a leader; for just as Jehovah guided the Israelitish host through the desert, so the Lord guides and controls His ransomed host by His own infallible

truth. If we may differentiate in the Christian life, and this alone to be understood, we see that God has made the fullest provision for bringing every phase of it under the control of the Word. If we begin with the outermost circle, the *political* life of the believer (and we do not use this term in the popular sense at all, as implying that the child of God has any warrant from Him for affiliating himself with unsaved ones in their world-mending schemes, but to show that in his relation to the State, the Lord has enjoined obedience to the powers that be, in all matters not affecting the Word of Truth and the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ), we find ample directions given therein for our guidance in relation to those in authority: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers"; "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13). Civil government, being of Divine appointment, its lawful claims must be implicitly obeyed by the believer; this much is insisted upon by the Word of the Lord.

He who has through His Word ordered our relation to the rulers of the people, has also given instructions for the regulation of *commercial life*. To those in the responsible position of servants, whether high or low, the Word comes to them with no uncertain sound: "Servants, be obedient unto them that, according to the flesh, are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Eph. vi. 5-8 R.V.). With this and kindred commands before the mind, can anyone laying claim to spirituality, which is obedience to His behests, join hand-in-hand with the unsaid in an unhallowed combination against an employer? Can they hold membership in a Trades' Union? O child of God, be prepared to suffer anything, rather than be entrapped into associations, which, as a rule, have for their object the terrorising of an employer into concessions incompatible with prosperity, and which are more or less manipu-

lated by socialistic and atheistic wire-pullers, and that for their own selfish ends.

He who is no respecter of persons, has no one voice for the servant and another for the master, but has legislated for both; He speaks as clearly and explicitly to the latter as to the former. O, ye masters, hear what He says to you! "And, ye masters, *do the same things unto them*, and forbear threatening; knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him." "Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1, R.V.). Happy, indeed, are the employer and employed who allow the Word of God to regulate all their intercourse with each other, and thus make their interests identical, and, thank God, there are examples of such to be found even in this socialistic age.

The Word is designed to control *social life* as well. It is beyond question that those who wish to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, will find their social circle a very narrow one, for it must be confined to those who are the children of God. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. vi. 14), takes in social intercourse. Yet many of the Lord's people disregard this (and pride is at the root of it), and suffer in consequence—suffer both personally and relatively. We have never known an instance where this injunction was wilfully despised without those who did so suffering in one way or another. O! beloved in Christ, be content with thy circumscribed social circle; better let it be narrow and have the Lord in it, than extended and He absent from it. Closely related to social, and frequently flowing out of it, is *matrimonial life*. Marry "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 39), is as much a command of God as "Thou shalt not kill"; and yet, solemn to say, how this is ignored by many Christians to-day, and with what sad, sad results, is only too apparent. Oh, the careworn faces, the aching hearts, unhappy homes, and blighted lives which abound, all through refusing to allow the word of the Lord to regulate the heart! Ah, child of God, are you contemplating entering upon a life-long union with one who is a stranger to His grace in Christ? then pause and consider this, no

matter how fair the future may promise to be, how happy and contented you expect your lot to be, yet, if you disobey the clear command of the Lord, you will find misery instead of happiness, sorrow instead of joy, and loss in eternity. Only one thing can come out of such disobedience, disappointment of the bitterest kind. If He at all has willed that you should enter into the marriage relation, then He has willed that it should be "*in the Lord*." He can never will contrary to His own expressed command.

*Conjugal life*: The close bond existing between husband and wife, who are one in the Lord, is an emblem of the vital union existing between Christ and the Church; and the pattern of the husband's love for the wife of his youth is that of Christ for His church (Eph. v. 25-28). Therefore, the Word of Life leaves no loophole for selfish indifference on the part of the husband, any more than it allows for insubjection on the part of the wife. Just as God is the Head of Christ, and Christ is the Head of the man, so the husband is the head of the wife, and hence the command, "Wives, *submit* yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. v. 22-24; Col. iii. 18, 19). If the Word of Him, who is both *Lord* and Christ, regulate the relationship of husband and wife, then they are happy indeed, and their home, be it ever so humble, is the abode of peace; but if, on the contrary, His Word is disregarded, then no matter how affluent may be the circumstances and comfortable the surroundings from a temporal point of view, wretchedness reigns there instead of peace.

Closely connected with this phase is that of *family life*. When we consider the importance of family life upon the individual, upon the assembly, and upon the State, we see the reason why God has devoted so large a portion of His Word to the subject, and why He has enacted so many laws for its proper regulation and maintenance. He jealously seeks to guard the family life, and hence His voice both to parents and children. To the latter He says; "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right"; "Obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 1-3; Col. iii. 20, R.V.). And to the former He gives words of caution, words which are twice repeated, showing the

need of such injunctions: "Provoke not your children" (Eph. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21). How great the tendency in the parent in seeking perfect subjection on the part of the children to provoke them to anger, and thus sow within them the seed of future disobedience. How much the blessed adjusting power of the Word is needed on mind, conscience, and affection, in order to rule wisely and well. But He who has given His Word to guide, is able to make His grace abound in carrying it out.

The seventh and closing phase of life, which is to be controlled by the Word of Truth, is *assembly life*. Many, very many, of the Lord's people are in a complete mist with regard to teaching of Scripture on the subject of assembly life; they naving never for themselves examined the Word to see how far the Lord has revealed His will on the matter. Some of those are, doubtless, more guilty than others, yet all are culpable for their neglect.

Others are in a state of perplexity, because of having given heed to the conflicting claims of rival "sects" to be "churches of God," or have got bewildered amid the Babel sounds of Christendom on the subject of "church government."

Whilst many have determinedly resisted all light that would have guided them into the ways that be in Christ, and with a zeal worthy indeed of a better cause, have taught for "doctrine the commandments of men." Whilst others (and not a few either), who have at one time followed the right ways of the Lord, but who in consequence of the difficulties, supposed or real, attending such a path, the unpopularity and isolation of such a position with all its flesh-humbling consequences, have gone back again, and not content with their own departure from faithfulness to Christ, seek to entice others into the darkness into which they have plunged themselves. It is, alas, most painful to witness the bitterness of spirit such can manifest toward those with whom they once ate bread, because they will not sell the truth taught them by the Holy Spirit, by forming pan-sectarian alliances, or be disloyal to the lordship of Christ.

Yet, thank God! in the midst of all that would at times tend to depress the thoughtful, there is much cause for thankfulness, for there

are those, who, having been taught the mind of the Lord through the Word, are seeking with loyal-heartedness, though may be in more or less conscious weakness, to carry out His instructions concerning His house. They know that an assembly of God is composed of living units, made alive by the sovereign action of the living God. Of such immersed in water unto the threefold *Name*, and who continue steadfast in the fellowship of saints, breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord's death on the first day of the week, seeking to worship God in the Spirit through Christ; rejecting an intrusive or "mimic" ministry, but thankfully accepting that ministry which is of God, and which, in consequence, is fragrant of Christ; exercising jealous, yet godly discipline, if the humbling cause for such arise, recognising the responsibility of stewardship, as well as its privileges, and are prepared to receive all the light God may be pleased to give through His Word.

Such well know He has given the most minute instructions concerning His assembly on earth, and are nobly, in the midst of obloquy and scorn, seeking to carry them out. Such, and such only, can be consistently called an assembly of God; for it is in those things according to His Word.

Every sect in Christendom to-day, is more or less a departure from the faith once given to the saints, though there be children of God in each of them. This is true of them all, from the godless, Christless, Spiritless, scriptureless system of the papacy, with its blasphemous pretensions, down to the latest development of "will-worship" in a religious militarism; for they are each a denial of the fact that the Word of the Lord has to control assembly life, and are each a solemn proof that men choose rather to have their own will than be in subjection to the will of the Lord. One word in closing this brief outline of the controlling power of the Word, the Truth must ever be read with a present self-application in order to control the inner life; and if this is done constantly and consistently, then every phase of the outer life will come beneath its influence and power, and, in consequence, the steps will be ordered according to the will of the Lord.

(To be continued.)



## REAL WAITING UPON GOD.

“**W**HEN they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him” (Luke xxii. 49-51).

Let us learn well the lesson taught here by the recorded mistake of Christ’s disciple. Asking God’s direction, is one thing; patient waiting for and following out of that direction, is another.

Oftentimes, do we not go to God in a formal spirit of inquiry, more to satisfy conscience that we have done the right thing—*wilfully blind to the fact that already our course of action is chosen?* Again, we go to Him in real perplexity; no light shines upon our path, and we seek it sincerely; but our patience cannot hold out the time of the answer, and hastily judging that our prayers have miscarried, or that it pleases not our God to grant the guidance sought, straightway we go out, and like the impetuous disciple, act upon our own judgment, fail, and return to weep before the Lord, like vanquished Israel of old. Let us flee this spirit of impatience, and taking the disciple’s failure as a warning signal, see to it that our boat steers clear of similar rocks.

The question scarcely put, Peter hurries into his self-chosen course, the restlessness of the flesh is too strong for the teaching of the Spirit. He cannot wait for the answer, and rashly presuming to lead the little band to resistance, takes the first step. What is the consequence? The Lord must needs *undo* what he has done. Had he waited, this need not have been the case. We read, “Jesus answered, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him.” In the undoing of that work by the meek and suffering Jesus, when the cloud of His own sorrows hung deep and dark over His head, surely the disciple must have read the reproof of his rashness. O that we might learn our Master’s will more by real waiting upon Him, than by the palpable failure of our work. Too often we take the undirected step, soon find that it has been a

wrong one, and must be retraced, and that with bitter repentings; but let us see to it that our repentings are for the *root*, not for the *fruit* of our mistake.

When we come to God for counsel, we must be willing to leave our whole case in His hands; to take the up-hill instead of the smooth one, should He point to it.

May we not discern in all Bible ages the disposition of God’s saints to fall into the snare, and the teachings of God’s Spirit in warning and checking it. “My soul, wait thou only upon God,” is David’s exhortation to himself again and again. “Wait, I say, on the Lord.” Indispensable to the sustaining of this waiting, is a living faith. “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God” (Is. i. 10).

The “father of the faithful,” and the “friend of God,” had to learn by painful experience that after long years of expectation, he had yet lacked patience in waiting for the fulfilment of His promise, with whom a thousand years are but as “a watch in the night,” and who hath said, “he that believeth shall not make haste.”

The case of the Syrophœnician woman supplies an instance of stable faith and patience, and she has her reward. “They shall not be ashamed that wait for Him.” Our God does not act in haste. Ages rolled away between the time of the first promise of a Saviour, and the manifestation of that Saviour, when “the fulness of the time was come.” “A little while,” says our Lord, “and ye shall see Me.” Eighteen centuries are gone, and we have still to say, “The vision is yet for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it.”

A beloved saint of God, now gone to her rest, once told me of a waiting time, which lasted over a period of nine years, during which she sought light to lead her from her home, into a path of service for the Master. For active service, she seemed eminently fitted; for it her soul yearned; but from it home circumstances shut her out. She conferred not with flesh and blood. She took to her heart David’s counsel, “My soul, wait thou *only* upon God; for my expectation is from Him.”

Home difficulties increased; circumstances

almost thrust her forth; the flesh urged, "Take a step"; the Spirit spoke still of faith and patience. At last the guidance came, and the first step was lit up with the clear light of dawning day. She stepped firmly forth, her hand in the hand of her Guide. Sunlight grew upon her path. It was shown to be one of very peculiar service; one for which few would be fitted, one for which in those years of waiting, doubtless God had been training her. The sequel was blessed. Her service was owned. Tokens of the Master's approval followed thick and fast—floods of blessing; and that beloved one became a channel, through which the water of life flowed freely, and where wearied pilgrims learned to seek for refreshment, and from whence, often, they renewed their strength.

Let us not grow weary in waiting upon our God. Let us count nothing too small, nothing too grave, to submit wholly to His wisdom. Let us watch well our spirit, that waywardness may not call for the use of "bit and bridle," so long as our Lord says, "I will guide thee with Mine eye." And further, let us beware, lest missing both guidance and restraint, we hurry into those impetuous actings of the flesh, which need the hand of God to undo them, and the Spirit of God to give repentance for them.

"O could our hearts by love thus swayed,  
Still watch and gaze on high,  
To know the will of Him who said,  
'I'll guide thee by Mine eye.'  
Less oft we'd feel the chastening rod,  
Less oft in sorrow lie;  
Correction pleaseth less our God,  
Than guiding with the eye."

S.

### LOVE MIGHTIER THAN LOGIC.

You may hammer ice on the anvil, or bray it in a mortar. What then? It is pounded ice still, except for the little portion melted by heat of percussion, and it will soon congeal again. Melt it in the sun, and it flows down in sweet water, which mirrors the light which loosed its bonds of cold. So, hammer away at unbelief with your logical sledge-hammers, and you will change its shape perhaps; but it is none the less unbelief because you have ground it to powder. It is a mightier agent that must melt it,—the fire of God's love, brought close by a will ablaze with the sacred glow. A.M.

## THE CLOSING WORDS OF FIRST CORINTHIANS.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

I Cor. xvi. 12-24.

**A**POLLOS as a servant of Christ is responsible only to his Lord and Master.

The apostle "**greatly desired him to come to Corinth: but his will was not at all to come at at this time**" (verse 12). We are not informed why. Perhaps he thought it better to keep away from a church in which some had been saying, "I of Apollos," until the apostle's faithful dealing had taken effect. He would do nothing to foment such a spirit of schism.

But whatever was the cause, a difference of opinion between Paul and Apollos was the result, and we find that however Paul might under some circumstances assert his authority as an apostle, in dealing with a fellow-servant he leaves him absolutely free, expressing no judgment or censure though he go contrary to his expressed and urgent desire. Paul would never for a moment seek to come in between Apollos and his Lord.

Verse 13. "**Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.**" Such was the language of the Philistines when once the ark of God was brought with a mighty shout into the camp of Israel.

The Christian, though weak in himself, should be "bold as a lion." He is to add to his faith, "virtue," or "manliness" literally: the courage that shrinks not from taking a bold stand against the adversaries of the Lord.

They were to "watch," for, in the presence of a subtle foe whose wiles and strategies are many and everchanging, no attitude but watchfulness could possibly avail. They were to "stand fast in the faith," for "the faith once delivered to the saints" was their shield and their stronghold. Satan is constantly, by some means or other, seeking to loosen the hold we have of "the faith." We see some of his efforts to do so in these Epistles to the Corinthians; again in Galatians, where the very foundation of the Gospel was assailed; again in Colossians, where through philosophy and tradition they were in danger of being spoiled by men; again in 2 Thessalonians we

see how Satan had tried to shake their confidence in the blessed hope, and how the apostle had to re-establish their souls in the truth. Then Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation, all tell the same tale of Satan's devices to undermine the faith and shake the confidence of saints, thus turning them aside from the way of truth.

And still it is the same warfare with the same deceitful and powerful adversary. Well may we in these last evil days give heed to the exhortation, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith."

Some have so far taken sides with the adversary as to deny that the church has any scriptural warrant for putting away from among themselves the holders of fundamental error of doctrine.

But surely if 1 Cor. v. is plain as to the leaven of evil practices, Gal. v. 9 is the same in principle, and the "purging out" that necessitated the putting away in the one case, would equally necessitate the putting away in the other. So in verse 10, the apostle expresses his confidence, not in the Lord that He would deal with the heretics, but *in them*, "through the Lord," that *they* would not fail to judge the troubler or "unsettler" of their faith, whosoever he might be.

So in 1 Tim. i. 20, the apostle delivers unto Satan certain whose errors were doctrinal (see 2 Tim. ii. 17). It was concerning "the faith" that they had made shipwreck, and the putting away of a good conscience had predisposed them to the error.

Can it be for a moment supposed that the church would retain in its fellowship one whom the apostle had delivered unto Satan?

Again in Titus iii. 10, 11, the heretic is to be rejected.

In 2 John, a lady is exhorted not to receive the teacher of false doctrine into her house, or to greet him, lest in bestowing upon such the greeting or the hospitality due to a Christian, she should become partaker of his evil deeds. Can such an attitude be consistently maintained towards one in the holy fellowship of the saints?

Then in Rev. ii., the Ephesian church is commended by the Lord for its judgment of false apostles, whilst Pergamos is censured for having still in their midst those who held the doctrine of Balaam, and those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

Surely all this has a voice for him who has an ear to hear.

Does it not show how fierce is the Satanic conflict with "the faith," and how watchful those must be who would maintain it in its purity and entirety.

In verses 15 and 16 we have honourable mention of the household of Stephanas. This is one of those "households" mentioned as having been baptised. In this instance Paul himself was the baptiser, for they were "the firstfruits of Achaia." It is sometimes assumed that the "houshold" must have included infants, but in this case, as in all the other instances of household baptism, there could not have been any, seeing that it is recorded here that the household addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

We do not read that they were ordained to this ministry by any human instrumentality. They wore no badge of office; but having addicted themselves to the work, they were to be submitted to and honoured. This spirit of submissiveness, implied in such words as "Yea, all of you be subject one to another," is essential to the effective carrying on of the Lord's work. It is when each one wants to be uppermost that trouble arises. If we had more of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, there would be little friction in the service of the Master.

Verses 19, 20, are occupied with salutations. It reminds us of 1 Peter iii. 8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

It is as much a Divine command to be "courteous," as to "love as brethren."

The kiss was the ordinary salutation, as it still is in the East, both of men and women. The Gospel is adapted to every nationality, to every climate, to all sorts and conditions of men. It does not set aside the ordinary customs and courtesies of life, though it regulates and refines them. The cordial shake of the hand, the loving grasp that comes from the heart, answers now-a-days to the oriental kiss.

But there are other ways in which courtesy can be shown. The Christian greeting, the loving salutation, the kindly inquiry, the courteous, gentle demeanour, the consideration for the well-being and convenience of others,

especially the aged and the weak ; all these, and many more, are opportunities for grace to display, not only its sanctifying, but its refining and ennobling influence.

Rudeness of speech and behaviour, harsh and ungentle words and manners, are as inconsistent with the order of the house of God as they are inconceivable in the ways of the Lord who is over it.

Paul writes the salutation with his own hand, showing what importance he attaches to it.

How solemn his closing words, "**If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maran-atha,**" or "accursed at the coming of the Lord." This is not the imprecation of an angry heart, but a solemn, awful warning to any who may be passing among men as Christians, and perhaps as teachers, who little cared to hide their enmity to Paul, but in whom Paul discerned an enmity that had not him for its object so much as his Lord and the truth.

First, and last, the great question is not of law, but of Christ. God's controversy with men is about a Person whom man has hated and killed, but whom God has raised up and exalted. The apostle begins his epistle with the salutation of grace, and as he ends it he strikes the same key-note: "**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you**" (verse 23). Then he closes with his own love: "**My love be with you all in Christ Jesus**" (verse 24). There were those who defamed and resisted him, who caused him bitter anguish of soul, but if they were "in Christ Jesus," that was enough for Paul. He sends them his love. No narrow heart is his. Though the more abundantly he loves them the less he is loved, still he will continue to love. May we learn from such a beautiful example the heavenly manners that comport with the holy place, and be followers of him in as far as he was a follower of Christ.

**"By their Fruits ye shall know them."**

Matt. vii. 20.

No creature's motives are to us reveal'd,  
Like sap within the tree they are conceal'd :  
But actions are of character a test,  
Which all the wise have ever deem'd the best—  
Words are but leaves, and will not serve alone,  
'Tis by the fruit the tree is clearly shown !

## A CALL TO PRAYER.\*

"I give myself unto prayer" (Ps. cix. 4).

**G**OD has a solemn voice to us in what is happening around us, and in what we hear from abroad, and it calls for humiliation and prayer.

Recently a week of prayer was observed in a number of meetings in Scotland, which was found to be so helpful that it is thought desirable to stir one another up to more united prayer.

If a spirit of prayer were fostered not only in our own hearts and in local assemblies in the British Isles, but also in other lands, much needed blessing would result.

With this conviction, the following subjects are suggested which petitions will amplify according to the heart's sense of need. This would lead to general fellowship in prayer, either at the usual prayer-meetings or at special seasons, as might be arranged, or privately:—

1. For more oneness of mind in the Lord among "all saints" (John xvii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. i. 10).

2. For more simple obedience to the Word of God, and for a deeper reverence for the Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; Jer. xxiii. 28, 29).

3. For local assemblies everywhere, that they may more fully express the mind of Christ; for increase of love in the truth—more patience and forbearance, as well as faithfulness—that so unity, instead of schism, may be promoted (Eph. iv. 1-3; iv. 32; John xiii.).

4. For the conversion to God of the children of Believers, and for increase of spirituality in those who are saved, both parents and children (Acts ii. 39; 2 Peter iii. 17, 18).

5. For deliverance from the spirit of pride and worldliness that is marring the testimony of God's people (Jer. xlv. 5; James iv. 4-12).

6. For the world at large, that our testimony for Christ may be greatly increased in power and yield more abundant fruit unto God.

"Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me" (Isa. xlv. 11).

\* Issued in leaflet form at 1/ per 100, post free.

## A PRAYER FOR THE PRESENT TIME.

DEAR Lord, I long to follow close to Thee,  
To render true obedience to Thy Word;  
In everything Thy will more clearly see,  
And to acknowledge Thee my only Lord.

Faithfully to keep the narrow way,  
Which Thou, my Lord, didst tread while here below;  
And persevere, whate'er the world may say,  
Content that I in Thy blest footsteps go.

I long to have a heart enlarged by love,  
That will the Heavenly Family embrace;  
And true affection to each member prove,  
By laying down e'en life for Thy great grace.

But, blessed Lord, two enemies I see  
Stand 'thwart my path to turn my steps aside;  
Two counterfeits, which fain would flatter me  
I have attained, and puff my soul with pride.

A narrow-minded spirit sets its snares  
To lure my soul from following "fervent love";  
And, cloaked as zeal, for sacred truth, declares  
Mere bigotry "the wisdom from above."

Or else false charity, with charms her own,  
With all her easy grace and winning ways,  
Says "Let contention for the faith alone,"  
Lest truth proclaimed should error's anger raise.

"The way to win," she says, "is compromise;  
The way to unity, a feigned peace;  
Let each do what is right in his own eyes"—  
Thus truth is hushed, her witness made to cease.

Ah! help me, Lord, lest either lead astray,  
To speak and do the truth, but e'er "in love";  
To love all Thine, yet "in the truth" always,  
That I may thus Thy richest blessing prove.

H. B. C.

LEVTON, ESSEX, 1890.

## REDEMPTION AND REST.

REDEMPTION from Egypt brings us into the desert, and if we have not God there we have nothing, for nothing belonging to this world can refresh the "new creature." When a Christian loses sight of God's hand and eye, he has only the desert around him. As long as the eye is fixed on God the soul rests on Him, and it is not the *end* only that is considered as *rest*, but the circumstances of the way become fresh channels of communion. Everything around us declares that our rest is not here. Labour, pain, and weariness of body and spirit, are the lot of all. The heirs of heaven cannot expect, and ought not to desire, rest while in the camp of idolaters; but there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

W. G. S.

## Correspondence.

## "THE KINGDOM" BAPTISMS.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I think it important that a short paper should be written on John's baptism (Matt. iii.), and on the baptism of the disciples in the Acts of the Apostles. Few people seem to see that the one is as much a rite connected with "the kingdom" as the other.

John came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and crying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven (or the rule of the heavens) is at hand." And the people went down unto him in Jordan, "confessing their sins."

Now this had a most solemn import to a people who undertook to maintain their position before God by their obedience to the whole law (Exodus xix.); and the moment a Jew confessed that he had sinned, he forfeited all claim to stand before the King who was coming to set up His kingdom and reign in righteousness.

God's first requirement, therefore, was that, in view of the King's coming, they should take their true place before Him as being ruined, like Israel of old who had to put off their ornaments until it would be seen what the Lord would do unto them. And it must be remembered that this was the *earthly kingdom*, for it was this which the Lord ostensibly came to set up, for "He came as a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. xv. 8). John's preaching, therefore, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, does not, nor could it, mean the forgiveness of sins with regard to the new birth or eternal life in heaven, but a *governmental pardon* to give a Jew, who had forfeited all his rights to the kingdom, a title to stand before the King, and not to be purged out of the kingdom as an offender the moment the King established His kingdom and began to reign in righteousness.

No one will pretend that this baptism put away sin in the sense of giving a title to eternal life in heaven, but that it had reference to the *earthly kingdom* which was then proposed to be set up. Now, if we come to the Acts of the Apostles, we find that the kingdom is offered *again* to the *men of Israel*; and while they are convicted of killing the Prince of Life, the offer is made to them on repentance of sending to them this Jesus *which before was preached unto them*. When was He before preached to them? Only by John the Baptist, as the One who came to confirm the promises made to the fathers, the One who was to gather the nation together and to return to reign over them.

That a truly repentant soul was as secure then for eternity as when Paul enunciated the doctrine of justification by faith in the epistle to the Romans is blessedly true; but eternal life is not the subject in the Acts, and baptism there has reference to the kingdom, and the title of those who killed the Prince of Life to a place in that kingdom. And as far as we read in the Acts, it has reference *only* to this, and is a rite connected with the kingdom.

In Paul's ministry it receives a fuller and more extended development and a deeper meaning, although, to me, it is a beautiful thought that it is still an

acknowledgment of a *rejected* King, and a public declaration that we own the rejected One as *Lord*.

The Lord's Supper had in like manner its place before the Lord's death; and in the Acts it had its place while the kingdom was still preached, and the disciples broke bread from house to house while they were daily in the temple. But in Paul's hands (1 Cor. xi.), it in like manner receives a fuller meaning, just as baptism does when the Lord is finally rejected.

We read of nothing about death and resurrection in John's baptism or in the Acts, but in Rom. vi. and Col. ii. Paul tells us what its deeper meaning is; whilst Peter, who, by the way, was the minister to the circumcision, is careful to assure us that baptism is *not the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh*, but the response of a good conscience towards God.

In chapter xxii., where Paul relates the incident of the visit of Ananias to him, in which he tells him "to arise, and wash away his sins, calling upon the name of the Lord," it must be remembered that though this is *narrated* so far on in the Acts, it occurred when Paul was first called out, as in chapter ix., and it has the same reference to the kingdom, and a promise of a governmental pardon, or putting away of sin, such as would pertain to any ceremonial cleansing under the law, where such expressions are used in the offering of sacrifice as "his sin shall be forgiven him," which we know only referred to the individual's ceremonial standing in his relationship with God, and not to the salvation of his soul.

F. C. BLAND.

#### "MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL."

DEAR SIR,—For several years now I have believed from the Scriptures, that Michael the archangel represents Christ. Certain it is that nowhere do we read of archangels, yet I have heard Christians in their prayers and addresses, and also in publications which are generally Scriptural, speak and write of archangels in the plural number.

I have now before me a little Gospel book, which refers to "angels and archangels, &c." This may seem a small thing to some, and not worth troubling about, but I consider that God's Word should not be tampered with, even by the addition or subtraction of a letter, as, if we begin by that, there is no telling where we shall end.

We get "the archangel" referred to in Dan. x. 13 and 21, 1 Thess. iv. 16, Jude 9, and Revelation xii. 7; and, while in *all* these Scriptures it is clear to me that Christ is represented in 1 Thess. iv. 16, it seems beyond all doubt that "the archangel" is our Lord Himself.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." I think it is therefore clear that it is as I have above stated.

It would be profitable if those who have gone fully into the subject, would send an exhaustive article to the *Witness*. Yours faithfully, B.

#### SUMMER WORK AMONGST THE VILLAGES.

We have been cheered with many responses to the brief notice given in last month's "*Witness*" regarding the purposed holiday work amongst the villages of *Yorkshire*, and on the Island of Arran. Brethren desiring to share in the *Yorkshire* work will please communicate with Mr. Plume Hawkins, 3 Upper Bell

Hall, Halifax, who will give all necessary information. The date for beginning work there is, as yet, unfixed; it will be arranged, as far as possible, to suit the convenience of those who purpose to share it—probably about the beginning of July. Those who desire to share the *Arran* work will please communicate with us as early as possible. It is hoped that we may be able to begin work there about the 20th of June, and continue it at intervals throughout July. The nature of the Island, and the difficulty of finding accommodation for a large number of brethren at one time, may render it necessary to go in small companies, and to spread the work over a long period. Brethren with a day or two to give will be heartily welcomed.

Yours in the Lord Jesus,  
ALMA COTTAGE, KILMARNOCK. JOHN RITCHIE.

### Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following:—

THE RIGHTEOUS, THE SINNER, AND THE UNGODLY.—It is being taught by some that the "ungodly" of 1 Peter iv. 18 are Christians in the sects; the "sinners" are those who have left a right position and gone back to the sects; and the "righteous" are those who maintain a right position. Is this the correct interpretation of the verse?

THE "SOUL."—What is the correct scriptural term for that which is commonly called "soul," the ever-existing faculty of man?

ANCIENT BABYLON.—Is there any scriptural warrant for the assertion, made by many students of prophecy, that the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt?

INTRODUCING.—What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for *introducing* those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them?

1 JOHN IV. 17.—Could any reader explain the meaning of 1 John iv. 17, last clause, "Because as He is, so are we in this world"?

#### THE SON OF GOD FROM ALL ETERNITY.

QUESTION 352.—Is it scriptural to say that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God from all eternity?

[In reply to above question, as to the Lord Jesus having been the Son of God from all eternity, we refer our readers to the valuable paper in this number by our esteemed correspondent, W. H. B. It really embraces all the points of importance touched upon in other replies. ED.]

#### THE DIFFERENT KINGDOMS.

QUESTION 353.—Matt. xix. 23, 24.—Please distinguish between "the kingdom of the heavens" and "the kingdom of God"; also

between the kingdom of "our Lord" and "His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15).

**Ans. A.**—The kingdom of the HEAVENS refers to the *place*, while the kingdom of GOD draws attention to the *Person* who rules.

Rotherham's translation of Rev. xi. 15 is, "The kingdom of the world became our Lord's and His Christ's." Our Lord here refers to the Father who delegates His authority to His Son, even as we read in the second chapter, verses 26, 27, Christ will give to some authority over the nations, even as He had received from His Father. F. W. F.

**Ans. B.**—In Matthew and Luke the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are used synonymously. One expresses the place of the kingdom, the other the Ruler of it. There is, practically, no difference. Rev. xi. 15 speaks of the kingdom of this world having now been taken possession of by God and His Anointed, and may be thus read, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord God, and of His Anointed as His Vicegerent." A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—Whilst in several passages the two expressions seem to be used interchangeably, and whilst in every place where "the kingdom of heaven" is used it might answer to "the kingdom of God," there nevertheless is, in our judgment, an important difference not touched upon in these replies.

"The kingdom of God" appears to us to be a wider, larger term, used in various places in a sense in which the term "kingdom of heaven" would not be appropriate; for instance, Rom. xiv. 17; also, Matt. vi. 33. The greater includes the less.

#### OUR "GATHERING TOGETHER" UNTO CHRIST AT HIS "COMING."

**QUESTION 354.**—Please explain 2 Thess. ii. 1.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him."

**Ans. A.**—In the first epistle, the saints were sorrowing on account of their brethren who had fallen asleep, fearing that they would be thereby prevented from sharing the blessing to be introduced by the Lord's return. And a special revelation is made to the apostle for the purpose of comforting them, and assuring them that we who are alive and remain, will have no advantage whatever over those who have fallen asleep; but that the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, and raise the sleeping ones and change the living ones, and that both will be caught up to meet the Lord, and then all will come "with Him." He thus establishes the fact that before the Lord is manifested, the saints will be translated to Him in the air, and so "when He appears they will appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii.).

In the second epistle, some were endeavouring to trouble the saints by asserting, with a pretended apostolic authority, that the DAY of the Lord was then present, or had already come; and the apostle refers to the truth he had taught them in the first epistle in order to preserve them from being troubled or shaken in mind by such assertions. It is as though he had said,

"You need not be troubled by those who would have you believe that the *day* of Christ is already present; we shall be gathered together to Him before that day arrives, and when He comes to introduce the day we shall come with Him." We beseech you, therefore, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering to Him (in the air), not to be troubled by those who would have you believe that the day of the Lord had already arrived. G. A. S.

**Ans. B.**—In the previous epistle the apostle had been referring to the ARRIVAL (Rotherham's translation) of the Lord Jesus into the air when we are caught up to meet Him, and had, as flowing out of that blessed theme, shown that for those who knew Him not THE DAY OF THE LORD was coming.

There is a contrast most definitely marked between the "we" of the believer and the "they" of the unsaved, even as between the "arrival" and the "day" of the Lord; the one being a time of salvation, the other of judgment.

In this second epistle, Paul seeks to comfort the Thessalonians in their tribulation; which evidently was felt all the heavier, as some were endeavouring to make them believe, that it was part of that foretold as belonging to the day of the Lord which they would persuade them "had set in" (2 Thess. ii. 2, Rotherham's translation). Verse 1 refers to the arrival of the Lord and our being gathered together to meet Him, and "touching this" (see R.V.) he would not have them shaken. Here, as in the first epistle, the arrival and the day which follows it are clearly distinguished. F. W. F.

**Ans. C.**—2 Thess. ii. 1 may thus be paraphrased:—Now we would thus enter into your difficulty, and consider your questions concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him in order that ye may not be easily shaken in mind . . . as though the day of the Lord was imminent. The force of the preposition "by" in verse 1 is not as though it was used as an argument to beseech, but merely that the apostle was now desiring to speak to them *about* this blessed hope (see R.V. *in loco*). A. O. M.

**Editor's Note.**—We add a word only to emphasise two points—First, the distinction between "the coming of the Lord" and "the day of the Lord." The one is an object of intense desire and delightful expectation, irradiating with its brightness the darkest hours of sorrow and of tribulation. The other is a period of distress and anguish, of darkness and judgment, and to be left to pass through it upon earth a prospect dreadful indeed.

It is impossible that the comfort of 1 Thess. iv., declaring the coming of the Lord to be their proper expectation and hope, and the comfort of 2 Thess. ii. declaring that a certain event *cannot* take place till much spoken of in prophecy has been fulfilled, can refer to one and the same event.

The second point we would emphasise, is the erroneous rendering in the end of verse 2. "That the day of Christ is at hand," ought, without doubt, to be "that the day of the Lord hath come."

Their dread was not that it was near, but that it had already, with all its terrors, burst upon the world, and

they had been left to go through it instead of being gathered together unto Christ in the air as they had been led to expect.

### CONFESSION OF SINS.

**QUESTION 355.**—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9). Does not this text imply that the believer needs to be forgiven again and again, and that conditionally upon his confessing his sins as they occur? If so, how is it reconciled with passages implying that forgiveness was imparted once for all at conversion? (See Col. ii. 13, iii. 13; Eph. iv. 32.)

[We regret that from lack of space we are unable to insert several other excellent replies received to this question. We select the three following as embracing the most important points.—Ed.]

**Ans. A.**—Confession of sins by God's children is here enjoined, and strongly urged as proof of true contrition (see Ps. xxxii. 51, written after David's grievous sin). *Fatherly* forgiveness and the sense of fatherly love follows heart-confession. The *judicial* forgiveness of the sinner once and for ever, on believing in Christ, is never recalled.

Brought thus near to God, we, as children of God, learn obedience, and walk in the light. But the light reveals our condition, and even leads to confession and to the ever-cleansing blood (1 John i. 7). A. O. M.

**Ans. B.**—In Colossians ii. 13, the Spirit of God states a past act, "And you, *being dead in your sins*, &c., *hath He quickened together with Him.*" This took place when we believed in Christ, for the working of His mighty power in quickening Christ was "only towards those who believe" (Ephesians i. 19, 20). Colossians ii. 13 adds to this, "*having forgiven you all trespasses.*" Thus, as sinners, we received a full pardon. Our sinnership account is closed for ever, and our God remembers the "*sins and iniquities no more.*"

But not only so. As sinners, we have died in Christ, and we learn in our baptism that we are buried with Him. Thus, as regards our sinnership, we are dead and buried, and God remembers us as sinners no more.

Out of the water of baptism God pictures our resurrection as sons; henceforth to be known as such, and to have a Father's chastening, and, it may be, scourging (Hebrews xii.). God speaks to us as sinners; but now, He speaks to us as sons. We are not to receive the grace of God in vain, and so, in Ephesians iv. 32 and Colossians iii. 13, God expects we will shine out the grace He has shown us in our intercourse with our brethren.

The opposite is given in Matthew xviii. 23 to end, and it closes with these solemn words, "So shall your Heavenly Father do unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Not that He will cast a son into hell, but He will give him over to the tormentors. To understand this, read 2 Peter i. 7, and connect verse 9.

Oh! the torment of a saint who cherishes an unforbearing spirit, and is brought to this, that He forgets the purging of his old sins (Colossians ii. 13), and in

experience is like with those who go down into the pit, fearing judgment to come. The way out of this is David's way (in Psalm xxxii), "I acknowledged my sin, and Thou forgavest." So in John i., "If we confess our sins (as sons), He is faithful and just to forgive." AMICUS.

**Ans. C.**—In the one case it is his *judicial* standing in Christ. In the other it is his moral or *spiritual* condition. When Christ by His own blood entered in once for all into the holy place, He obtained "eternal" redemption for all who believe (Heb. ix. 12). The redemption being eternal, the forgiveness of sins included in it must be eternal also.

In Ephesians and Colossians the believer's oneness with Christ is set forth. In the former the believer is seen in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies (Eph. ii. 5, 6). In the latter, it is the believer dead, buried, and risen with Christ; and Christ in the believer down here (Col. i. 27; ii. 11, 12, 20). But in both it is the believer's oneness with Christ. The believer is not only by and in Christ delivered for ever from the guilt and penalty of sin; but in Him is received into the infinite favour of God.

Divine justice having now nothing against the Lord Jesus Christ, there can be nothing against those who are in Him. Thus the question of both sin and sins is in this aspect settled for ever. God has justified; Christ has died; and He now lives to repel every charge which may be brought against a believer (Rom. viii. 33, 34).

In the first epistle by John the believer is seen in quite a different character. It is not now God as Judge dealing with man as a sinner, and declaring the believing one righteous on the ground of the propitiatory sacrifice made by Christ. It is God as a Father dealing with the believer as a child.

When we believed the Gospel, we were absolved from all guilt and received into that infinite favour of God in which Christ now dwells. But although we are now the children of God, and as such have a perfect standing in Christ, yet we have still sin dwelling in us, and are liable at any moment to come under its power; and while, if we do sin, it can never affect our standing nor our relationship, yet sin allowed will shut the child out of the Father's presence, and keep him out until sin is confessed. Not summing up sin in a lump and confessing it in a general way, but the owning and telling out the special desires, words, or actions which we have allowed.

This exercise of soul ought to be the daily experience of every child of God. Seeking to enter more fully into the judgment of God of what sin is in its very nature. And as we thus get into a deeper fellowship with God, we will be more keenly sensitive of the motions of sin in our hearts and in our members; and thus with self-loathing we will be led to judge and confess both root and branch of sin in the presence of the Father, and also learn to more rightly estimate the value of the precious blood that keeps the contrite soul clean while walking in the light, and on the ground of which the guilty but penitent child can have the broken link of fellowship restored and be introduced afresh by the Almighty Advocate into the sunshine of the Father's unchanging love. G. A.



## THRICE "PEACE BE UNTO YOU."

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY HENRY DYER.

**I**N this world there is no peace. There never was peace here since the time when sin first entered and ruined our first parents. Moreover, this is the darkest age as respects any peace that ever has been. It has been likened to a ship at sea, whose crew early murdered their captain and ever since have been fighting among themselves as to who should be captain. It is what Isaiah long ago said: "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked"; that is, to the lawless, those who won't be subject to the living God. Cain was a lawless man, and murdered his brother, and never did he have any peace after that. And as this same guilty age keeps darkening, it deludes itself by talking about peace; but it has no real peace. Only those who know the living God through the living Son can possibly have that. Peace in the soul by the blood, peace in the circumstances by the mighty arms of the risen Jesus, is the portion of the saint; and this forms our subject.

Let us turn now to that chapter in John where these precious peace-speaking words occur. But before reading the verses, a word upon these two blessed chapters. I like, in my mind, as I read them, to write over chapter xix., "He made peace by the blood of His cross"; while over chapter xx. I would write, "He came and preached peace." The world preaches peace, but it has never made it; Jesus made peace, therefore His preaching of it is precious. Of no good would it be for me to invite the poor of the neighbourhood to a supper if I had no supper ready provided for them. One other remark. As I read down the chapter, I think was there ever so great and so precious a Shepherd over so timid, so feeble, so ragged a flock. A feeble Mary, I find, weeping, at the top; a fearful band barricading themselves against the enemy in the middle; and a doubting Thomas at the end. Oh, fellow-saints, always to see ourselves in that light: a little feeble flock, and a great Shepherd.

I.

But now let us read chapter xx. 19: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the

disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews." The word "assembled" is rightly omitted in the Revised Version, for this was not merely a place of gathering, but they had made it their dwelling-place where they had barricaded themselves for fear of the murderous Jews. And He saw by the appearance of the room, with its door and windows barred, and by their very faces, that they had not the peace proper to them. "Came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side." The hands, where they had nailed Him to the cross; His side, where that spear went in. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." Ah, beloved friends, that is what always makes us glad. When Paul wants to put joy into the fainting Hebrews, he says, early in his epistle, "We see Jesus." Here, then, we have the first of these three; now let us read the second.

"Then said Jesus unto them again, As the Father" (that is, the common Father of you and me, as He had earlier said) "hath sent Me" (out into that wicked, wicked world), "even so send I you." You too must go out into that murderous, restless world. He does not now repeat His action of showing them His hands and His side, but He breathed upon them an animating, informing spirit, that shall put discernment into their souls. The Spirit, as He descended upon them at Pentecost, was a spirit of power; the Spirit breathed upon them here is a spirit of intelligence, a discerning power that they might see who were the saved and the pardoned, and who were not. Now we will see what was the third.

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." Didymus means a twin, and we are never told who was the other; in order, I suppose, that I may say that I am his twin brother and just as ready to fail. "The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." The Scriptures have said that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established; but Thomas would not be

instructed. Notice how very dogmatic he was, how very resolute and determined was his language; quite a difficult state of mind for a believer, and more still an apostle, to be found in. "And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus." Oh, lovely truth! for the sake of an uninstructed and backward soul Jesus comes the second time. How much do we owe to the weak one of Scripture, whose weakness has drawn out the love of our adorable Lord. "The doors being shut" (Nothing do we read now as to fear of the Jews); shut now to show the distinction between the little flock within and the world without. "And stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." That is, unto all of you; about this church difficulty; over this weak and rather trying fellow-apostle. "Then saith He to Thomas." Ah, the voice that melts the stubbornest of hard hearts. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands." What must have been the astonishment of Thomas to find that his own words, spoken when no visible Jesus was present, were known and heard. So like this to Ps. cxxxix.: "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether." But the Master didn't excuse him, notice, because he had been slow to believe. But Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God"; or, more literally, "The Lord of me." Who knows even me, and the very depths within me; and knows that the bottom of my badness, and the blackest of my blackness, is my unbelief. Ah, this is Ps. cxxxix. again: "Search me, O God, and know my heart." "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And Peter never forgot that word, for as he writes to these Gentile churches he says, "Whom not having seen, ye love."

God bless to us this preaching of peace from the new, warm, risen lips of the precious Jesus. The moment He got His body again, see how he used it; the moment He got His breath again, how He used it. I love that little hymn:

"The Saviour rose as full of love,  
As when He bled and died;  
And now He lives in heaven above,  
To bless His church and bride."

I always seem to link these verses with that one in John xiv. You all remember the words, spoken in these closing dark days, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world never gives peace, because it has not got it to give. This mighty city, with all its vast riches, cannot give peace, for its heart is always shaking and quaking. The British empire and its government, though it be the biggest government in the world, cannot give peace; its condition is that of which the Master spake when He described these very days, "Men's hearts failing them for fear." Not the British army, nor the British navy, though they may never have been beaten; not science and art, nor yet an abundance of gold can keep fear away. Belshazzar, the great king, was rejoicing in his security and his riches at his costly banquet, yet did he shake with fear at the appearance of the hand upon the wall. But such are not the saints. Two things, beloved, are yours, as sure as eternal life is yours: peace as to your conscience, and peace as to your surroundings. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Now join with that verse these threefold utterances here in resurrection, and joy in the sweetness of finding that He doubles in resurrection the word spoken in feebleness.

But I would have you notice not only how He speaks, but the difference of these three utterances. And I would state, first of all, what I see the difference to be, and then verify what I have said. I think of the first, as respecting any fear whatever, as to what an angry world can do for you; for He saw that door shut, and these windows barred for fear of mortal man. As to the second—peace, when I send you out into that angry world as message-bearers for God. You shall have peace, because I give you power to see the real character of those around you, even when they surge about you, hating your God's message. Thirdly, peace in your church work, when you have weak and feeble saints, and difficult to deal with, in your assembly, that you may bear patiently with the most trying and difficult. And it does seem that Thomas became the most precious edifier of the whole company.

(To be completed in next Number.)

## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

FROM NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

### 2 Cor. i. 1-4.

THE former epistle was written out of a heart full of anguish and with many tears: this is full of joy and consolation. We get the character of the epistle in the frequency with which we find the words "comfort" and "consolation" in this first chapter, and again in ii. 7 and vii. 4-13. That which so stirs the apostle to the very depths of his soul, is the spiritual condition of the church at Corinth.

Let us ask ourselves, are we thus affected and cast down as we consider the low spiritual condition of individual Christians and of assemblies with which we are more or less intimately associated?

Are we thus comforted and rejoiced in heart when we hear of assemblies walking in the ways of the Lord; carrying out His will and so glorifying Him? or have we got to so low a condition that these things do not affect us? If so, it only shows how little fellowship we have with the heart of God and how little we are in the mind of Christ.

The apostle had a large heart. In chap. xi. he mentions, in addition to many things he had suffered in the service of the Lord, "that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (ver. 28). Doubtless in a special degree this care was laid upon him; and it may be that God does not call anyone now-a-days to so weighty a charge as the apostle Paul. Nevertheless, God would have our interest and sympathies to extend to every member of the body of Christ, and very specially ought our interest and our prayers to be extended to such as are gathered unto His Name alone, and seeking to abide by the teaching of the Word of God. To see the development of spiritual life in the Lord's people ought to be the object of our deepest solicitude. Spiritual life, according to the apostle's estimate, consisted in obedience to the word of the Lord. If he saw not this in the saints, he sorrowed and wept and prayed for them. If he discerned obedience to the will of God, he was glad at heart and gave thanks to God.

In the opening verse, Paul again, as in the first epistle, emphasises the fact that he is an apostle "by the will of God." This is important; for in the church at Corinth there were "false apostles," the ministers of Satan rather than the servants of God.

He associates Timothy with him in the address; for whilst asserting his own apostleship, and that most emphatically, when necessary, he ever seeks to give honour to his fellow-labourers.

He includes with "the church of God at Corinth" "all the saints which are in Achaia." Though distinct from the church at Corinth they were one in spirit, and necessarily more or less interested in what had been going on in Corinth, and co-operating in service (see chap. ix. 2).

Surely this fellowship of saints and churches of God is well-pleasing in His sight. There is indeed little which answers to it to be found now; and the danger is that, in order to bring it about, a circle may be drawn comprising such saints and assemblies as see that originally there was, and that still there ought to be, such fellowship, and excluding all those who have not learned to value it, or who, indeed, from experience of other attempts at the same, may dread every appearance of united action and suspect it jealously of being only a step toward Presbyterian domination.

Practically, those excluded from such a circle are treated as evil-doers, as those unfit to be associated with as saints: an issue that the right-hearted cannot contemplate but, with abhorrence.

The apostle's salutation is ever most precious—"Grace unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 2). What a godly, loving spirit it breathes!

Verse 3, "**Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.**" In Scripture, names are generally characteristic of the persons they designate. In the New Testament, God is called the God of love, of glory, of hope, of peace, of patience, of grace, and of all comfort. Thus the name of God is associated with all that is lovely and blessed. Putting them all together, what a character is portrayed, what a God is ours! And it is to know and enjoy this God that we are called. "This is

life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

The title here given, "Father of mercies, and God of all comfort," tells us that there are no mercies and no comforts for these poor hearts of ours but those that come from God. None but He who spared not His Son could show mercy to a sinner. Never had we drunk one drop of comfort, in time or in eternity, had it not come to us from the great source of all comfort in the heart of God.

Verse 4, "**Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.**" It is interesting to observe how much there is in the Scriptures about comfort. Here the word used has the thought of encouragement in it. In Num. xxi. 4, 5, we have an instance of how Satan gets the advantage over a discouraged soul. "The people were much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses." If the soul is not enjoying the comfort of God, His discipline is sure to give rise to false and hard thoughts of Him. The hanging down of the hands represents discouragement. You remember how Amalek came to fight against Israel in "Rephidim," which, according to some authorities, signifies "slacked hands": and it was by means of the holding up of the hands of Moses that victory over Amalek was given. So in Heb. xii. 12, we read, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down." There had been needed and painful chastening, and that is just the time when Satan comes in to discourage and cast down. We need encouragement in the time of trial, and such is the character of this second epistle.

To follow this a little, look at Ps. xciv. 19—"In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul." In this Psalm the lawless are seen gathering themselves together against the righteous. Lawlessness seemed to be enthroned and the innocent blood was condemned. In seasons such as this, how utterly powerless would the soul be if the comforts of God were not enjoyed.

Turn also to Rom. xv. 4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Thus we learn that God supplies comfort through His written word. The Holy Spirit is the comforter,

but the means by which He teaches, enlightens, comforts, and sanctifies, are the Scriptures. But there must be patience if His comfort is to be known. An impatient spirit will always seek relief from trouble apart from God; and, therefore, misses the comfort that God alone can give. But the patience that waits on God will surely know the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

If the Holy Spirit is grieved, then we shall not experience His comfort. We may go to the Scriptures, but they seem dry and barren; in vain the soul seeks there for comfort. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is grieved. An unbroken spirit, proud unloving ways, unjudged sin, a defiled conscience: if these things exist, then the comfort of the Holy Spirit cannot be experienced.

One reason why so many of God's children know so little of His comfort is, because they know so little of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.

We don't get much comfort, because we are not in much tribulation. The apostle never lacked comfort, because he was never out of tribulation. He had much indeed to try him, to cast him down and discourage him; but his faith and hope were in God, and so he rose above it all.

The comfort which God ministers to His servants is not intended to end with them. The object is, as he says, "That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." It is in times of darkness, trouble, and sorrow that we most realise the value of the Word of God. If in seasons of temptation we have known the power of God to succour, it is that we may encourage others in like trial to lay hold of the same almighty power.

If in the midst of sorrow and bereavement certain passages of Scripture have yielded comfort and joy to our souls, it is that we may minister the same comfort to others who are in like sorrow. Don't let us forget the way God has encouraged and comforted us: each such experience is a precious treasure committed to our charge for the benefit of others. That verse, "Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord; and I will declare what God has done for my soul," is often misapplied. It has

nothing to do with a young convert telling sinners his conversion. That may be very good in its own time and place; but this refers to a believer telling fellow-saints his experience of the faithfulness and loving-kindness of the Lord.

There was a time among certain Christians when the telling of experience was so common that it became forced and unwholesome. But there may be among us a recoil to the other extreme, and a reticence about experience that tends rather to barrenness; if, indeed, it is not the result of utter barrenness of soul. It is a sad thing for a child of God to be wholly occupied with doctrinal and objective truth, and to know little or nothing experimentally of the grace and faithfulness of God. We read that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience. The apostle well knew this, and, therefore, he can bring out of his treasure precious experiences as well as doctrine for the edification of saints.

We ought to take heed lest our ministry degenerate into mere talk, which neither edifies nor sanctifies the hearers. We need something deeper than mere knowledge, in order to minister to edification. We need experimental acquaintance with God and with the Lord Jesus, and experimental knowledge of the value of the Word. Let us go on patiently learning the Word of God in fellowship with Himself. Let us seek light from God as to our path, and prove His faithfulness as we follow in the path of obedience. Thus following on to know the Lord, each day will be God's school for us, fitting us the better to serve Him, and leading us into deeper intimacy with Himself.

*(These papers on this valuable SECOND Epistle will (D.V.) be continued monthly).*

---

OUR SUFFICIENCY.—Let us never forget the all-sufficiency of the *grace* of God—"My grace is sufficient for thee"; the all-sufficiency of the *Word* of God—"All Scripture is given . . . that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works"; the all-sufficiency of the *Spirit* of God—"He shall guide you into all truth," "bring all things to your remembrance," &c. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

## PAUL TO PHILEMON;

OR

### The First Anti-slavery Petition.

**M.** RENAN has called the Epistle to Philemon a *note*. It is indeed a letter in few words, but this very brevity only enhances the greatness of its contents.

Jerome tells us that the Epistle to Philemon was rejected by many writers. From the absence of any approach to doctrinal teaching in this epistle, they concluded that it was not by St. Paul, or that, if it was his, it did not belong to the canon, since it contained nothing by which the church might be edified. This decision arose out of a narrow view of the canon, and the primitive church, as a whole, did not ratify the verdict. Preserved at first as a precious relic in the family of Philemon, this apostolic document was subsequently placed among the archives of the church at Colosse, in the house of one of its elders.

The church very early learned to appreciate the importance of this brief letter. It differs undoubtedly from the other writings of the apostle, inasmuch as it refers to a purely personal and private matter. But this private matter came within the scope of the work which Christianity was to accomplish among men. And even if it had not been so, how full of interest for us must be the one opportunity supplied by this letter of studying the character of the apostle Paul in this private relation which brings him into such close contact with our daily life.

We read in Col. iv. 7 that when the apostle sent to Colosse the letter intended for the church of that city, he entrusted it to one of his fellow-helpers named Tychicus, and that Tychicus was accompanied by another brother, Onesimus, whom Paul describes by the honourable terms, "faithful and beloved," and speaks of him as "one of us." It is impossible to doubt that this Onesimus is the subject of the Epistle to Philemon, and that it also was therefore sent to Colosse.

In the city of Colosse, in the beautiful basin of the Lycus in Phrygia, there lived then at this time a rich citizen named Philemon. This man, as we gather from the epistle, had been brought by Paul himself to the knowledge of Christ; and as Paul had never visited the

churches of the district in which Colosse was (Col. ii. 1), we must conclude that the rich Phrygian burgher had been converted by the apostle at Ephesus during a visit which he paid to that capital. The wife of Philemon, we find from the second verse of the epistle, was named Apphia, and as Paul mentions immediately afterwards in the same verse the name of Archippus, it is highly probable that this third personage was no other than their son.

After saluting the three principal members of the family, Paul goes on to greet the church gathered in the house. This does not mean simply the household of Philemon; the name *church* does not allow of such a restricted signification. On the other hand, the distributive preposition *kath* equally excludes the whole body of Christians at Colosse. It refers rather to that portion of the church which was accustomed to meet in the house of Philemon.

But it may be asked, if Paul was writing to Philemon on a private matter, why should he have addressed his letter to the section of the church of which Philemon's house was the centre? And out of this question arises another. Why should he have associated the name of Timothy with his own in such a letter?

It must be admitted that the case of Onesimus interested in some degree the whole of the little community that was wont to meet in the house of Philemon. They had all heard of the wrong-doing and of the flight of his slave; and now that Onesimus had come back as a Christian, Paul wished to secure for him from them all the same brotherly welcome which he desired Philemon and his family to give him. Hence he wrote commending Onesimus to the confidence and love of them all. It was doubtless with the same end in view that he introduced the name of Timothy. Perhaps Timothy had himself visited Colosse. At any rate his recommendation would take away any semblance of favouritism or personal weakness on the part of Paul. That which Paul asked as the "prisoner of Jesus Christ," Timothy asked in the name of the Christian brotherhood ("Timothy our brother"), which united him to the church at Colosse and formed a plea for the kindly reception of the

new brother. We hear nothing further, however, of Timothy in the letter, and Paul speaks throughout in the first person singular, because it was really his affection for and personal interest in Onesimus which made him write.

What was the wrong-doing which had caused Onesimus to run away? The apostle refers to it in verse 18. The expressions used do not necessarily imply that the fugitive slave had committed a theft. They may be explained on the supposition that he had been guilty of culpable negligence which had brought serious loss on his master. However this may be, it was the fear of well-merited punishment which had caused Onesimus to run away.

A modern commentator has shrewdly observed that the Epistle to Philemon was a practical commentary on the injunction of the apostle in the Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 6): "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." As we study the letter in detail, we shall be struck with the truth of this remark.

In the opening words, verses 1-3, the apostle speaks of himself as the prisoner of Jesus Christ, delicately substituting this description for the usual one, "servant of Jesus Christ." He is indeed at this time fulfilling his apostolic calling, not by active missionary labours, but by bonds and imprisonment. This thought is well adapted to open the heart of Philemon to grant the request Paul has to make. He calls Philemon his "beloved and fellow-worker," because when he became a Christian, he had placed his strength, his property, and his life at the service of the same work in which Paul himself was engaged, the salvation of men (verse 6).

These opening words are followed, as usual in Paul's epistles, by thanksgiving for that which God has already wrought in the readers, followed by a prayer for the continuance and increase of the work (verses 4-7). In verse 5 the apostle says, "hearing of thy love," and not, as in the corresponding passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 15), "hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you." The conversion of the readers of the Epistle to the Ephesians was an *accomplished fact*, of which the apostle had been assured once for all, while the love of Philemon was a

present and constant disposition of mind, the ever-new manifestations of which gladdened the heart of Paul. The apostle adds, "and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints." It is not without advertence that Paul brings out in this instance alone, the faith which a Christian should have, not only towards the Lord, but also toward those who belong to Him. He had spoken of faith in an analogous sense in 1 Cor. xiii. 7. "Love covereth all things, believeth all things." In speaking of the faith which Philemon has not only in the Lord, but also in the work of grace which the Lord can perform in the heart of the vilest of men, Paul is certainly thinking of the welcome he is about to ask for him who was formerly the unfaithful slave; which welcome must depend entirely on the confidence felt by Philemon in the work of grace wrought in Onesimus. A succession of disappointing experiences often produces among Christians, particularly among those who are older, a religious scepticism which paralyses love and kills enthusiasm. The good there is in the saints must be always, with their fellow-Christians, a matter of faith. It was this faith toward all the saints which was about to be tested in the case of Philemon.

In thanking God for this gift bestowed on him there is an implied exhortation that he should be faithful to it in the case in question. In verse 6 Paul gives the substance of his prayers for his friend Philemon.

"*The fellowship of thy faith*" must refer to the beneficent communications of which his faith is the source. These become more and more abundant and effectual by the knowledge of the beauty and holiness of the work which God performs in Christians, *to the glory of Jesus Christ*, through whom it is done. In desiring for Philemon a growing knowledge of the work of God in his brethren, Paul certainly wishes to prepare him to recognise with gladness and confidence the (to him) almost incredible change wrought in Onesimus. We see how free Paul's style is from anything that is stereotyped. Every word has its peculiar fitness. The language of the apostle is the ever fresh garb of a truth ever new.

After this preamble the apostle passes to the subject of his letter, the commendation of Onesimus to his master. But before making

his request, as he does in verse 17, he carefully prepares the way (verses 9-16).

In verses 8, 9 he reminds Philemon who it is who makes this claim on him; it is he who, as the apostle of Jesus Christ, might have all boldness to declare to Philemon the will of the Lord, and to enjoin him what was fitting to do under the circumstances. But he prefers to appeal to his heart, asking that of him as a proof of his love which he might have enjoined as a duty. His claims to the affection of Philemon are all comprised in that name *Paul*, which recalls to him so many memories, and in those two epithets which render its appeal still more forcible, "the aged," and "a prisoner." Paul's age at this time would be about fifty-five. The labours, the sufferings, the persecutions he had endured, had prematurely aged him, and he knew well how these two words, "aged" and "a prisoner," would touch the heart of Philemon.

After thus reminding Philemon who it is that asks, he goes on to speak of the one for whom he intercedes. He is careful not to name him at first, knowing what painful associations the name would call up. He begins by describing the close bond which his conversion had formed between himself as the spiritual father and this child whom he had begotten in his bonds. And only after this does he mention him by his name Onesimus, which means "helpful," and which would be merely ironical if applied to the part played by him in the house of Philemon, but which has become now a true description, because of the kindly offices he has already done for Paul, and is anxious now to do for Philemon also if he will consent to forgive and receive him back. Paul is evidently playing here upon the name of the slave, but not as a mere *jeu de mots* to display his wit; rather as a delicate way of recommending the faithful slave to his master, by substituting for the remembrance of his past failures the hope of the service he might now render. It is in this capacity of a servant who will prove himself in the future worthy of his name (helpful) that Paul sends him back.

(*To be continued.*)

It is His work *for* us that is the only foundation for His working *by* us.

## AN EDIFYING MINISTRY.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY JOHN RITCHIE.

THE object of all true ministry among the saints is their edification. Whoever opens his lips to teach or exhort his fellow-saints, should therefore make it his aim that no communication shall proceed therefrom, save that which shall be "good to the use of edifying"; or, as we read it in the Revised New Testament, "for the building up of the need" (Eph. iv. 29, margin). So long as there is "need" among the people of God—and this will continue in varied forms throughout the whole of their earthly course—it is the will of God that an edifying ministry should be continued amongst them, varying in its character according to the condition of those to whom it is given. There are, I would venture to suggest, three constituents necessary to a ministry that will be for the edification of the saints. They are as follow:—

*First*, That the ministering one has been called by God, and fitted for the place that he seeks to fill.

*Second*, That what he speaks is not only the truth of God, but His message also, suited to the condition of those who hear it, and so spoken that the youngest and most illiterate may understand.

*Third*, That the spiritual condition of the speaker, his state of soul, and the spirit and manner of his communication, is such that the Spirit of God may be able to use him as a channel through whom He may minister that which will enlighten, instruct, and edify the saints, bringing their consciences into exercise, and drawing their hearts toward God and Christ. A brief word on each of these.

The question has been asked, "Do you believe in a stated and an appointed ministry?" I answer, Assuredly. To reject such a ministry would be to ignore a Divine institution. Do we not read of God's appointment to ministry in the words, "God hath set in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. xii. 28)? We do not claim to have apostles and prophets among us now. Since the canon of Scripture has been completed, their ministry has ceased, save in the

sense that they minister to the saints through their writings still. But the Risen Christ still continues to give "teachers" (Eph. iv. 11). Their work is to expound the Word, for the instruction and edification of the saints. The common practice in the various denominations is for the congregation to choose the man whom they desire to fill this place; and, having found him, he is then ordained to the office. The eyes of many have been opened to see the unscripturalness and disorder of this system, and how utterly it fails to provide an edifying ministry for the people of God. We do not therefore recognise ministers of man's creation and appointment, simply because they have no claim for recognition if they lack the credentials of a "good minister of Jesus Christ." But in refusing to recognise that which is false, we must see to it that we do not fail to receive and own a ministry that is of God's appointment, and leave room for its exercise among us. It is to be feared that not a few who declaim loudly against a "one-man ministry" have yet to learn that "an *any-man* ministry" is equally opposed to the order of God, and in its results a greater failure still. Yet this unscriptural system is practised among some who profess to own "the Bible alone" as their guide, and who profess to be a church builded according to the Divine pattern. They have "an open platform," where anyone may stand up and speak, and which will be found generally occupied by those who excel in ignorance, arrogance, and verbosity. Need it be wondered that the saints are not edified, that the benches are quickly emptied, and that where once a well-ordered, healthy, and happy company of saints was found, there is now little else than dead formality, coupled perhaps with loud boastings of a scriptural position; and where once a vigorous Gospel testimony went forth, there remains a mere effigy, in the form of a Sunday-evening meeting to which no stranger ever goes, and to which godly ones would be ashamed to invite their neighbours? I am persuaded that where this kind of thing goes on from week to week, and year to year, it is simply impossible that there can be godly edifying, and I think it will also be found to be the root cause of much of the worldliness and loose conduct so much mourned among



us. A well-fed flock will not readily "jump the hurdles" to tread forbidden paths; but need we wonder if hungry souls who pine for bread, and who do not find it in the borrowed words and hackneyed phrases of these self-appointed men, who have crushed out all true ministry in the places where they are, be found roaming hither and thither wherever they can get a handful of the corn of heaven. We conclude, therefore, that one of the greatest hindrances to godly edifying among the saints, and one of Satan's most potent devices for withering up the spiritual freshness of God's assemblies and eventually scattering them, is the intrusion of a counterfeit ministry of self-appointed men whom God has not called, and cannot rise to the edifying of His people. But given that the minister has been called of God, he requires to be furnished. His own soul must be "nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine" (1 Tim. iv. 6), "The Word of Christ dwelling richly" in him "in all wisdom" (Col. iii. 16), so that he may be able to "bring forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52), "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15), and ministering that Word as those who listen are "able to hear it" (Mark iv. 33). It by no means follows, that because a man has collected a stock of Biblical knowledge, and is possessed of certain powers of utterance, that his ministry will be for the edifying of his fellow-saints. Unless the truth abides in power in his own soul, it will not flow in freshness from his lips, carrying life and health to others. This is often forgotten; and the result is, a barren verbose ministry, abounding in witty sayings, and often in ranting declamation. But there is no godly edifying in all this. No heart is drawn nearer to God, no conscience is searched by the living Word. It only stirs the flesh: in some to opposition, in others to precipitate action. It seems to be the forte of some public speakers to sustain the attention of their audiences by making startling statements, and introducing novelties. But in the things of God this is intolerable. Yet we have heard men, professing to feed God's flock by their ministry, say the most outrageous things, hurling their latest finding on some obscure doctrine or point of order on their hearers,

evidently to startle them, while they enjoyed beholding their consternation. We know of nothing more fruitful in sowing discord and causing division among God's people than the not uncommon practice of springing *new* (and, in some cases, false, or one-sided) doctrines on promiscuous audiences of God's people. This was not the way of the Lord Jesus. He "spoke the Word unto them as they were able to hear it" (Mark iii. 33), often and again pausing in His discourse to explain more fully His doctrine, and to ask, "Have ye understood all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 36-51). Some of His disciples were "slow of heart to believe" all that had been written concerning Him, and this prevented Him from unfolding many things that He otherwise would have spoken had they been able to "hear them" (John xvi. 12); yet He did not on that account cast them off, but continued instructing and expounding to them, line upon line, until some of them acknowledged, "Was not our heart burning within us while He spake to us?" (Luke xxiv. 32, R.V.). There are still those among the saints whose minds open slowly to receive the truths, but whose hearts are more easily made to burn within them as Christ is presented to them. These must be considered and dealt with according to their need. It ought not to be too hastily concluded that they are "rejecting the truth" (to use a current phrase), because they do not immediately accept and act upon every new doctrine that may be brought before them. In the case of some there is prejudice and preconceived opinion. I daresay there are few who can say they have always been free of either; but this may be disarmed by wise, gracious, and yet decided ministry of the truth. It has been so in thousands of cases, by patient, faithful, and wise dealing; whereas, in others, the prejudice has increased and deepened into hostility by the ungracious, unwise, and even ungodly manner in which they have been dealt with. There is no inconsistency between being "gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25), and keeping back nothing that will be "profitable" (Acts xx. 20) to the saints. Many, perhaps most of the schisms which arise among scripturally-gathered companies of saints have

ELEMENTARY ARTICLES, No. 8.

## SEPARATION FROM SYSTEM.

their origin in certain truths being pressed beyond their measure, and it may be upon a people who are not in a condition to bear them. Then parties are formed around the favourite doctrine, which, in the estimation of its promoters, becomes of increasing importance, until it eventually becomes the uniting bond among all who hold it, and the supreme test of "faithfulness to the Lord." A ministry of this sort tends to tear asunder, instead of building up and knitting together, the saints; and it becomes the responsibility of those who stand before the flock, and who watch for their souls as those who must give an account, to exercise such vigilant firmness as will prevent the Lord's flock from being by such means overdriven and scattered in this dark and cloudy day. Then last, but not least, the speaker's own spiritual condition will greatly affect the character of his ministry. If he has become carnal, no matter how true the words he may speak, they will lack savour. If the weeds of pride, or jealousy, or self-esteem have been allowed to grow in his own soul, it is vain to expect that God the Holy Spirit will take up such a vessel, or through him minister grace to those who hear. The result must necessarily be a barren and an unedifying ministry.

Never was there a day when the Lord's servants had a better opportunity of wisely, graciously, and faithfully ministering His Word than now. The corrupt condition of the churches, both in doctrine and practice, has caused many of God's people to come out of them, or to sit loosely in them. Time-honoured institutions fail to keep men's minds in thrall as once they did. There is a spirit of hearing abroad. Many are groping after the truth, and inquiring for the old paths. Some learn slowly, or, having learned, follow sluggishly; nevertheless, the appointed means for their help and for the instruction and edification of God's people as a whole, is a faithful, uncompromising, and seasonable ministry of His Word, in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

---

"We have been having some precious morning meetings lately. No restless eyes, no wandering heart, where the person of the Christ of God fills the one and satisfies the other." W. J. H.

FOR the uninitiated reader it may be needful to explain what we mean by "system" before we advocate the importance of separation from it. To even the most superficial observer, it is a fact that needs no demonstrating that religion has become systematised. There are schools of thought, systems of theology, propounders of theories, and promulgators of doctrines almost innumerable, which have helped to form and continue to uphold the manifold systems of religion existing at the present day, and which, on account of their more or less unscriptural character, we are obliged to designate "systems of men."

In the beginning of the Church's history, as recorded in the New Testament, no such thing existed; the word of the Lord was regarded as a sufficient authority to organise the fellowship, define the ministry, and appoint the ordinances of the children of God. The saints were united, for "all that believed were together," "and of the rest durst no man join himself unto them." The ministry was with power, for it was energised by the Holy Ghost. The ordinances were simple and expressive, being according to the Divine pattern, and the whole economy of grace was harmonious and uniform throughout, as a result of obedience and subjection to the one Lord.

We shall not attempt to trace the origin of the various systems of religion, nor to define their several characteristics, but merely assert what thousands even of those who are in "system" themselves will freely admit, that, from the corrupt church of Rome, which claims to be the oldest, down to the latest and most insignificant of the systems of men, "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable."

For the godly souls that are entangled therein we have the greatest sympathy, and rejoice in the fact that "the Lord knoweth them that are His," and is graciously pleased to manifest Himself to them, and not unfrequently gives them much blessing and success in His service, notwithstanding their association with some man-made system which God disowns, and

His Word condemns. Hence we would be scrupulously clear upon this point, that all the children of God, scattered throughout the various sects of Christendom, we love in the bowels of Christ; whilst the systems involving them, which circumscribe their fellowship, cripple their usefulness, and hinder their spiritual development, we most uncompromisingly declaim against.

The principle of separation is clearly laid down in the Word of God, being variously illustrated by many examples. For instance, Abraham, by the call of God, was separated from kindred and country to live the life of faith, to walk before God, and to worship as a pilgrim and a stranger in the land of Canaan; and if for a brief period he turns aside, and failure ensues, the full sense of restoring grace can only be enjoyed as Egypt is separated from, and his steps are retraced to "the place of the altar, which he had made at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord" (Gen. xiii. 1-4). The same principle is illustrated in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. On the ground of redemption, they were separated unto God to learn His will, to obey His voice, and to be His peculiar treasure (Ex. xix. 14). And when afterwards they corrupted themselves in the matter of the golden calf, self-judgment and separation to the Lord Himself outside the camp were the only conditions upon which God would accompany them in their journey to Canaan. But time would fail us to trace out this principle, as examples are so numerous.

The feeble remnant gathered out from the pollutions of Babylon deserve especial notice, as illustrating this important truth. Recognising these foundation principles, we find them constructing their altar and offering their "burnt offerings thereon, as it was written in the law of Moses the man of God" (Ezra iii. 2). No novelty brought with them from Babylon could be introduced into their worship, no adaptation to their changed circumstances, no toning down to meet the tastes or prejudices of the world-bordering semi-professing worshippers. Everything must be done "as it is written." Twelve he-goats for a sin offering (chap. vi. 17), and twelve bullocks for a burnt offering (chap. viii. 35), according to the

number of the tribes of Israel. This was Divine ground; this was going back to the original pattern; here was the recognition of this God-given principle of separation on a basis broad enough to take in the whole twelve tribes of Israel, and yet narrow enough to exclude all who could not trace their pedigree to the head of one of those tribes. To apply this principle to what is going on around us at the present day, is the chief object of this paper; hence we are led to inquire—Is there not a basis upon which all the saints of God can meet for fellowship apart from the systems of men? And this question we gladly answer in the affirmative—Certainly there is.

The same common ground upon which the Christians gathered in the beginning, having no distinguishing name except such as God has given them in His Word, and which applies equally to all believers. This is "the foundation of God which standeth sure," as solid to-day as when it was first laid in the beginning. The same blessed Name that saved the three thousand on the day of Pentecost had power to gather them, and to bind them together in one loving harmonious fellowship. "Jesus in the midst" was a blessed reality then, as it is indeed still to thousands of God's dear children, who, by taking heed to what "is written" in the New Testament, have become detached from the systems of men, and are now experiencing such a measure of God's presence and blessing as was never enjoyed before. In a previous paper, we pointed out the "sin of sectarianism"; in this we would urge "separation from system."

If you would more than enjoy the blessings of a restored remnant gathered out from a Babylonish confusion, begin at once, set the altar upon its basis. Let the pattern of your fellowship be "according as it is written," large enough to take in all the Israel of God, and exclusive enough to shut out all that is of man; broad enough for the exercise of a God-given ministry in all its blessed variety, with room for the scriptural observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper apart from priestly intervention, and orthodox enough to admit the supreme authority of the Word of God. Remember, Divine principles as laid

down in the beginning and practised by the early Christians have never changed, although grievously departed from, as is everywhere witnessed. The doom of Christendom is fast approaching, and the warning voice of a long-suffering God may already be heard proclaiming loud above "the strife of tongues," in tones of earnest entreaty, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins," (Rev. xviii. 4). Many Christians who freely admit the unscripturalness of the present disorder, and are grieved by the ever-increasing multitude of man-made systems, nevertheless refuse to separate from them, on the plea that they can be more useful where they are; or because they cannot see the perfect thing anywhere else. We would lovingly remind such that God values our obedience more than our usefulness, and if you have discovered that your present ecclesiastical association will not bear the scrutiny of His eye in the searching light of His holy Word, then, if you would be found well-pleasing to the Lord there remains but one course open to you. And as to finding a perfect church, no one claims to have found it; but separated companies, striving often in much weakness and conscious failure to carry out New Testament order, are happily on the increase, and in most cases easily found by those who are truly exercised, and wish to do the will of God. "Separation from system," however, is clearly the first step. "Cease to do evil," then "learn to do well."

"One step I see before me;  
'Tis all I need to see:  
The light of heaven more brightly shines,  
When earth's illusions flee;  
And sweetly through the silence comes  
His loving 'Follow Me!'"

J. H.

THE Lord sometimes humbles us more than we reckon on, that we may the better learn of His Spirit to humble ourselves, that He may exalt us in due time.

MOSES, the "faithful" servant, said, "Who is on the *Lord's* side?" (Ex. xxxii. 26). Jehu, the zealous servant, said, "Who is on *my* side?" (2 Kings ix. 32).

## THE WORD OF LIFE:

Its Relation to the Believer.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

"*THE WORD OF LIFE*" (1 John i. 3).

"*The Word of Life*" (Phil. ii. 16).

V. To indicate its action in **CONSECRATING** life.

WE have endeavoured to show in the previous chapter how that the Word is ordained of the Lord to control the outer life of the child of God; and in this we seek to unfold the sense in which it acts upon the inner life, thus consecrating him to God and His service.

In our Lord's high-priestly prayer there occurs this brief but comprehensive petition: "Sanctify them in the truth: Thy Word is truth" (John xvii. 17-19, R.V.). The word translated "sanctify" has the meaning of "to consecrate"; in fact the revisers have so rendered it in the margin. It signifies to set in a state as opposed to common or unclean; or to deliver from that state, and put into one corresponding to the nature of the Holy God, wherein there can be the fullest fellowship between Himself and the consecrated one. It therefore contains two ideas: the first is to separate from, and the second to consecrate to. Thus the Lord prayed that His immediate followers (and not only they, but all whom the Father gave Him as the reward of His obedience unto death) should be separated from the evil of the world, and consecrated to Him on the pattern of His own. "For their sakes I sanctify (consecrate) Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." It is universally admitted that the instrumental means of this consecration is the literal truth—not any truth but the spoken Word of God; but may it not have a yet deeper meaning still? May it not be that *The Truth*—the Incarnate Word—the Lord Himself—who, in the Father's wisdom is made unto all who trust in Him, "Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption"? We do not state this authoritatively, but tentatively. Of course, if it were so, it does not in any way militate against the fact that the Written Word is the instrumental means; to affirm the former is by no means a

denial of the latter. One thing is true, that the literal truth, no matter what may be its beauty, utility, or power, apart from *The Truth*, cannot sanctify; it were rationalism to aver it. Loyal obedience to the Word, the motive power of which is love, is consecration to God.

To profess to seek it apart from Christ and the Word of Truth is a delusion of the most ensnaring kind. In the following passage we see it to be the elemental means of practical sanctification (2 Cor. vi. 14; vii. 1).

Jehovah's *fourfold* imperative command—"Be not unequally yoked," "Come out," "Be ye separate," and "Touch not the unclean thing"—if responded to, will separate the believer from the *five* evils indicated—unbelievers, lawlessness, darkness, Belial, and idols. In order to stimulate the sluggishness of heart which is common to all saints, He gives *seven* promises replete with blessing:—"I will be your God; nay, your Father; I will receive you; will walk with you; nay, dwell in you; ye shall be My people; nay, more, My sons and My daughters." Such are the promises of the Lord Almighty, pregnant with blessing, and full of power for those who lay hold upon them by that obedience which is out of faith. What a basis they form for the apostle's exhortation. "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (R.V.). Blind, indeed, must be the one who, looking at those scriptures, fails to see that consecration is an intensely real thing; no sentimental sanctification of frames or feelings, ecstasies or religious excitations; but a practical thing, coming down to the minutiae of daily life regulating that, as well as cleansing the inner shrine of the Tobiahs and their carnal desires. On the Divine side of this subject, He consecrates in the *Living Truth*; on the side of the believer, it takes place through obedience to the Written Truth. The former is perfect and complete, whilst the latter is progressive, and depends entirely upon the response given to the commandments of the Lord. How much of that which we hear to-day about consecration is empty and inane talk, because connected with the most patent disobedience. How men and women talk of being "baptised

with the Holy Ghost," whilst living in the most manifest disobedience to the Lord's command to be baptised in water unto the threefold Name. May the Lord give us to see that our consecration to God is in the proportion to our obedience to His revealed will, and that the truly consecrated life is the one that is best doing His commandments. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

(To be concluded in next Number.)

## Correspondence.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

Thanks for *The Witness*. I can hardly tell you how much it is appreciated, only that in these distant lands its value is enhanced tenfold.

While writing, I would like to ask for an interest in the prayers of the saints on behalf of the Malays. There are probably at least thirty millions throughout the Archipelago, and, after making inquiries, I do not know of one other worker devoting himself wholly to this people.

It is intensely interesting to labour here, on account of the close analogy it bears to the work of our blessed Lord Himself among the Jews. My brief experience has been, that, in nearly all cases, the Malays will listen attentively to the Word of God, especially when presented in its practical bearing upon the life, *i.e.*, as "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i.), "salvation from sin" (Matt. i. 21). Such a standard as is given in Matt. v. 28-44, they have acknowledged to me is beyond their power to attain. This has afforded a good opportunity of preaching Christ and the exceeding greatness of the power of His Spirit.

Of course, these truths being emphasised, our lives are subject to a severe examination. Pray for us, and any other brethren the Lord may send here, that our lives may indeed be "holy and without blame before Him in love."

JAMES W. MOORE.

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS, April 27, 1890.

MANY thanks for sending *The Witness*. Its pages both interest and exercise one. We noticed not a little grace in some of the answers to questions. If half the Scotch believers were abroad, not half of the questions would need to be asked, however.

What a solemn reminder of our failure is Stanley's account of Africa! What millions of her sons have never heard "the Name!" We feel this the more when we think of long meetings being occupied over the preposition which precedes that holy Name in Matt. xviii. Zeal for every jot and tittle demands that some should teach us the meaning of the Greek prepositions. But, oh, that the Church, bearing in mind the due proportion of truth, would give itself no rest till both Jew and Greek knew more of the meaning of the verbs, "to be," "to do," and "to suffer," as they saw our earnestness in carrying out the imperative command of our Lord.

Last Friday we baptised a youth who has recently received Christ the Saviour, to his salvation and great joy.  
SPAIN, May 21, 1890. GEO. J. CHESTERMAN.

WE began work on Saturday last; had a good time in the Castlegate; large crowd at meeting; was alone. Brother Horne came on Monday. We hope to be in Aberdeen all this week and part of next. I have heard of blessing from last year's work in Fife; this encourages one in the work. So far we can praise the Lord for His goodness. Pray for us. E. STACK.  
ABERDEEN, May 28.

## Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following:—

Is it right for Christian parents to bring their children to the Breaking of Bread Meeting, and to furnish them with hymn books to join in the singing? Further, is it scriptural to allow those to sing who have been put out of fellowship, but who come and occupy the back seats?

What would be the scriptural course for an assembly to take with a sister who persists (honestly believing it to be of God) in addressing mixed audiences of men and women?

Please explain Luke xxiii. 43 and xvi. 26.—When a Christian falls asleep in Jesus where does his soul go to? and, is it active or not?

Why is the tribe of Dan not mentioned in the list—Rev. vii.?

Where there are converts in one place speaking different languages, mutually unintelligible—e.g., Chinese, Malays, Tamils—would it be contrary to the Word of God to hold separate meetings for the Breaking of Bread on the Lord's-day?

When one believer is far from a gathering ought he alone to remember the Lord in the Breaking of Bread?

Does Deut. xxiii. 19, 20 forbid a brother in the Lord, in this dispensation, taking usury from another brother?

Do the words, "this day," in Ps. ii. 7, and quoted in Acts xiii. 33 and Heb. i. 5, refer to the incarnation or resurrection of Christ? and if it be either, how are the verses to be reconciled with the eternal Sonship of Christ?

### THE RIGHTEOUS, THE SINNER, AND THE UNGODLY.

QUESTION 356.—It is being taught by some that the "ungodly" of 1 Peter iv. 18 are Christians in the sects; the "sinners" are those who have left a right position and gone back to the sects; and the "righteous" are those who

maintain a right position. Is this the correct interpretation of the verse?

Ans. A.—Did this verse occur in the second epistle by Peter where the apostasy is foretold, there would be some room for suggesting such an interpretation as is mentioned in this question. But when we find it in an epistle where everything appears to be in scriptural order—no trace of anything but the two classes, saved and unsaved, the church and the world—it is difficult to see how such a construction could be put upon it, unless by a mind preoccupied with some favourite theory.

The only interpretation which is in keeping with the tenor of the epistle, is to understand the "righteous" to include all justified ones; and the terms "ungodly" and "sinners," to mean the same as they do in Rom. v. 6 and 8; what all are until saved by grace—ungodly by nature and sinners by practice. Surely there is sufficient in the Word of God to inculcate separation from sectarianism without putting a fanciful interpretation on scriptures that are so very plain to the unbiassed reader. Much more could be said, but it is not necessary. It is not light that is needed in this case, it is an unprejudiced mind. G. A.

Ans. B.—This scripture must be read in the light of what goes before and what follows. There is in the whole chapter a line of demarcation between the *sinner* and the *saint* (see verses 2 to 5, also verses 8 to 16). Then at verse 17 we have, "Judgment must begin at the house of God"; the others are defined as "those that obey not the Gospel." Clearly this means the *saint* and the *sinner*. This is confirmed by Hebrews x. 21, "An High Priest over the house of God." All Christians are represented by the High Priest in God's presence, and all have access by the blood. Now judgment has begun here: "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi.). The *bloodmark* ensures this. The Spirit of God then asks, "If the righteous with difficulty are saved, where shall the *ungodly* and the *sinner* appear?" Abraham might, and doubtless had reason to doubt if Lot was born again; but the Lord knew he was (2 Peter ii. 7 to 9), and chastened, nay, scourged him, that he might not be condemned with Sodom. The terms "ungodly," "sinner," apply to unregenerate men here at least, and "righteous" to the regenerate (see also Rom. iv. 5, v. 6); while in 2 Peter ii. 9 Lot is called *godly*, the opposite of the term. In the sense of *want of conformity to the will of God*, we are all conscious of sin; *Christ* is the standard of perfection. But nowhere, in speaking of the *saved*, does God apply the term "*sinners*" to them, though we are but *saved sinners* in reality; but God knows us "*in Christ*" (2 Cor. xii. 2).

If we put 1 Peter iv. 18 alongside of Psalm i., the question is fully answered in verse 4: "The *ungodly* are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the *ungodly* shall not stand in the judgment, nor *sinners* in the congregation of the *righteous*"; but every child of God will (Heb. ii. 12, 13; see also Genesis xviii. 23, Ps. xiv. 5). AMICUS.

Ans. C.—Alas! for the teachers who teach, and the taught who receive such miserable teaching.

Is it any wonder that strife and division obtains

amongst those who are ostensibly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the "lowliness of mind," in which "each esteems the other better than themselves," is supplanted by a spirit of arrogance and self-complacency; and when, instead of confessing our utter failure and ruin, as regards the testimony entrusted to us, since the Lord Jesus ascended on high and sent down the Holy Ghost, and with adoring hearts for the grace that permits us to gather together in the ever-abiding and precious name of Jesus, taking our place as debtors to His sovereign grace and mercy and faithful love, we avail ourselves of the light He has so graciously afforded us, to sit in judgment on fellow-saints, who, perhaps, without the same measure of light, are walking far more faithfully to that they have?

It is one thing to judge a false *position* in the light of the Word of God, and in obedience to that word to purge ourselves from it. This we are bound to do if we are to be faithful to the Lord; but it is another, and very different thing, to judge and condemn, and brand as "ungodly," saints of God, who, for want of a fuller discernment of the Lord's mind, are still associated with that which we have left. If I am walking in the light I shall not only discover my own worthlessness and failure, but I shall be able to see much more of Christ in other believers; leading to self-condemnation rather than to the judgment of them.

As regards turning "back to the sects," it may be well to ask ourselves, Whose fault is it? Did we see that these dear sheep of Christ were really exercised in heart and conscience about the matter when they came from "the sects"? Have we sought to feed them with the sincere milk of the Word, with Christ and His truth, while they were with us? And have they seen in us that practical exhibition of what we profess, so as to leave them without excuse; or, has the contrary been an occasion of stumbling to them? G. A. S.

**Ans. D.**—The first epistle of Peter was not addressed to any particular assembly, but to those who were "scattered." Persecution had arisen, and they were learning what it was to suffer for the name of Christ. In the paragraph from which the words are quoted (verses 12-19) the inspired writer would have them understand that their persecutions were permitted that they might have fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, and would have them look on to the coming glories of Christ, which also they would share with Him. He shows them that it is a needful testing-time they are passing through, and should be a happiness to them to suffer for the name of Christ; but earnestly warns them to see to it that they bring not the trials on themselves by suffering as murderers, thieves, evildoers, or overlookers in other people's matters. If they suffered, let it be for the sake of Christ and not for those things which are sinful and ungodly; remembering that already a testing-time had come for the house of God, as it would come even to their enemies. This house is different from (a) house of God, being referred to in chapter ii. 5 as now in process of building (lit., are being built up a spiritual house). Verse 18, referred to in the question, is really a quotation, being the Septuagint Version of Proverbs xi. 31 (Alford's Notes); it can be literally rendered—"And if the righteous (one) with difficulty is saved, where shall the ungodly

and sinner (singular, without definite article before sinner) be manifested." If the one suffering for the name of Christ with difficulty stands the testing-time, because of his enemies within and without, what will the result be on that one who, having fallen into sin, as defined in verse 15, is made to suffer for it. The summing up of the whole we get in verse 18. If, therefore, they suffer according to the will of God, that is for being Christian, they may safely commit themselves to the Lord, who, even as a faithful Creator, is concerned about His handiwork. F. W. F.

**Ans. E.**—Certainly not, unless it be correct to render 1 Tim. i. 9 as follows: Knowing this, that the law is not made for Christians maintaining a right position, but for those who are in the sects, or who have left a right position and gone back to sects.

In the Second Epistle of Peter we have an illustration of *the righteous*, scarcely or difficultly saved—viz., Noah and Lot; *sinner*s, in the wicked spirits led by Satan; and, *ungodly*, in those who perished in the flood (2 Peter ii. 4-8). A. L.

**Editor's Note.**—Answers A and B seem to us to contain about all that need be said upon this passage. The same apostle, in 2 Peter iii. 16, speaks of some who "wrest" or "torture" the Scriptures in their efforts to make them declare what they want rather than to expound their meaning. We fear that such teaching as this comes perilously near the sin alluded to.

It is certainly a new departure to be informed that those who are called saints are also called ungodly and sinners. It seems to us that the line of demarcation is most definite in scripture, and that it is our business to keep it so, both doctrinally and practically.

Satan has ever sought to mingle what God has separated, and consequently to separate what God has joined. Formerly, and still by many, the titles and privileges that attach to the children of God alone have been handed over to the unregenerate. They are called "Christians" and admitted to "church privileges," &c., &c.

Another danger now stares us in the face, equally disastrous and more subtle, for it appeals to our pride and self-righteousness, viz., to class certain children of God in teaching and in practice with the unregenerate—calling them "sinners" and "ungodly," and demanding separation from them as such.

Truly these are difficult times!

"AS HE IS, SO ARE WE."

**QUESTION 357.**—Could any reader explain the meaning of 1 John iv. 17, last clause, "Because as He is, so are we in this world"?

**Ans. A.**—As to person, place, and state, we are *not* as Christ. As to His person: He is the Son of God; we are fallen creatures. As to place: He is in heaven; we are on the earth. As to state: He is holy in His nature; we are sinful in nature. "As He is, so are we in this world," refers to Him and to us as completely beyond judgment: it can no more reach us than it can reach Him. S.

**Ans. B.**—The subject in this passage is the love of God towards us, and our love to God and to one another flowing out of His love to us.

"Herein has love with us been made perfect" (or complete); namely, in giving us a perfect standing in Christ even now while we are in this world. God, in His love towards His children, has not waited until the day of judgment is past before He has given us the place of perfect acceptance in the Beloved One. *The perfection of His love is, that He has done it now, and that notwithstanding our utter unworthiness and failure.* Whatever the issue of our judgment as servants may be, whether reward or loss, it will in no way affect our standing in Christ, nor will it in anywise increase or lessen the love of God towards His redeemed family.

We should ever seek to walk in obedience to His revealed will, so that we may now "abide in His love," and that He may have the joy of commending us in the day of judgment; but the judgment which has given us perfect acceptance in Christ even now, and which will give us boldness in that day, took place at the cross. And as Christ is now the accepted One in the presence of God, so every believer stands now, and ever will stand, in His acceptance. While the prospect of the "judgment seat of Christ" should have a salutary effect on our walk now, we should never allow it to bring us into bondage. G. A.

**Ans. C.**—Where is the difficulty? The fact of being in Christ, and Christ in us (verse 13); the Spirit in us (verse 13); the Son sent as Saviour (verse 14); God in us, we in God (verse 15); *as He is, so are we* in this world (the place of probation), should surely give us boldness or freedom of speech. It is that we have been made the righteousness of God in Him. O. B.

**Ans. D.**—1 John iv. 17, last clause, seems to refer rather to our state or condition here—as one like to His—than to *our standing in Him*. The *loving* condition proves our heavenly origin and shows to others whose we are, while it is assurance to us we are not self-deceived. A. O. M.

**Ans. E.**—John treats of the Church as a family, and his direct teaching is of *life and birth, of nature and conduct, not of standing*. The Father of this heavenly family, God, "is *love*," and so are those who are *born* of Him. "He that *loveth* is born of God." Such can say, "As He is so are we." Yes, even "in this world," for now are we the children of God, begotten in His *image*. This *likeness, or image*, is essential to the mutual indwelling in God and God in us, and also of boldness in the day of judgment. This was true in the first Adam. While he retained the *image* of his Creator he had *boldness*; but when he lost it, when he ceased to obey, which is *love* (2 John 6), tormenting fear took the place of *boldness*, and he fled from His presence to hide himself. But those who are partakers of life in the last Adam are in Him a new creation after the *image* of Him who creates, and will be found, in the day of judgment, not only in, but *like* Him who is the outshining of the Father's glory and express character of His substance. They will have *boldness*.

H. H.

**Ans. F.**—Verse 7 of this chapter says, "Every one that loveth is born of God." Verse 12 says, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected

in us"; or, in other words, those who love are the offspring and the manifesters of God. Compare John i. 18 (Gospel). Then verse 16 says, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him." Thus His offspring, though still in this world, are "as He is," that is, of His nature, even now, and, when the day of judgment comes, their meeting with Him will be the meeting of children with their Father, and will be characterised by boldness, not fear.

The manifestation of love *by* us is the proof that the love of God *to* us has been so apprehended as to change our nature; in fact, that it has so taken hold of us as to bring forth fruit to perfection; or, in other words, is perfected in us. It is like the sides of an arch—God's love to us being one side, and our love to Him and to His people being the other, and the two together representing perfection; and where this exists fear has no place.

It may be added that the popular interpretation, which makes "as He is, so are we," to refer to our standing in Christ, is out of character with the passage and with the epistle generally, and is based upon a superficial reading of the text and its context. In other references to boldness in this epistle—chaps. ii. 28, iii. 19-22, v. 14, 15—*confidence* is uniformly translated *boldness* in the Revised Version. R. L. S.

**Editor's Note.**—The above six replies give as concisely as possible the gist of very many answers received to this question. We regret much not to be able to give more, and take this opportunity of beseeching our helpers to *study to be brief*, as some of the replies not given are withheld mainly on the ground of being too voluminous.

The answers range themselves in two distinct lines—one, as in Ans. A and B, refers the text to judicial standing; the other line refers it to essential character. The one line of explanation is, in effect, "as Christ is" judicially beyond the judgment, so in Him are we beyond judgment, even now in this world. In this view it is regarded as corresponding to John v. 24.

The other line of explanation is, in effect, "as God is," in essential character, love, even so we, as born of God, as indwelt by His Spirit, and as reconciled by His love manifested in the gift of His Son, are in our essential character what He is—love; and, therefore, being delivered from all slavish fear, have confidence in prospect of judgment.

It is a cardinal doctrine of Scripture that God is the Judge of all, and that in due time all men will give account to Him. In prospect of this, two distinct lines of teaching in the Word are calculated to give the believer confidence. One is the fact that as sinners, our judgment is past, and that, therefore, the judgment into which we shall come is not one of justification or condemnation, but one of reward and loss.

The other is that, being sons of God and partakers of the Divine nature, we are as He is. His judgment, according to His own character as "light" and "love," will be altogether according to that character which is essentially ours now in this world, though only feebly apprehended and still more feebly manifested.

The latter we consider to be in keeping with the whole character of the epistle.



## SUFFERINGS, CONSOLATION, AND CONFIDENCE.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES ON 2 COR. I. 5-10, BY  
J. R. CALDWELL.

**F**OR as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (verse 5). Thus the measure of the sufferings becomes the measure of the consolation. It is the way of God to provide the consolation just as it is needed, and not before it is needed. Have you not often wondered how the martyrs were sustained, so that even amid the flames they could rejoice and glorify God? Here is the secret: as the sufferings abounded, the consolation also abounded.

Mark, it is "the sufferings of Christ." Often we have to trace our sufferings to our own self-will and carnality, and then we need not wonder if we lack consolation. The "sufferings of Christ" are those sufferings only which result from the manifestation of the life of Christ in us. As world, flesh, and devil were opposed to Christ, when He lived in this world, so now are they opposed to Christ living in His members. When reproached for the name of Christ, when suffering loss for righteousness' sake, all such suffering is reckoned by God to be "the sufferings of Christ," and in these all the love of God and all the sympathy of the Great High Priest are pledged to impart consolation. But in this particular passage the apostle is experiencing rather a different aspect of the sufferings of Christ, an aspect that few enter into, because few have entered as Paul did into the fellowship of the desires of the heart of Christ. Here the occasion of the apostle's sorrow is the low condition of the saints, their letting go the truth, their carnality and divisions. We thus learn that when a servant of God is sorrowing and cast down in spirit because of such things, this also is "the sufferings of Christ"—for no such sorrow would be felt were it not for the life and sympathies of Christ within, begotten and developed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6, "And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation," &c. The salvation here referred to is a present ex-

perience. There is an aspect of salvation that was completed at the time of our conversion through the work of Christ for us. We read, "unto us who are saved," and "who hath saved us," &c. There is also an aspect of salvation that is future, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed," "for an helmet the hope of salvation." That is the completed salvation of spirit, soul, and body at the coming of the Lord.

But the salvation referred to by the apostle here is a present daily salvation from enemies and temptations within and without. The apostle is experiencing this salvation. The consolation and encouragement with which his soul is filled as he writes are in themselves salvation, for without it he would faint and fail. But all this suffering and consolation, all this precious experience of the saving power and faithfulness of God is to be handed over by him as a heritage to the saints: that they also might set their hope in God, and, through suffering with Christ, be also overcomers with Him.

Verse 7, "And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."

We do not read that the Corinthian saints had been suffering any particular kind of persecution. On the contrary, the apostle had said, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us."

He is here referring rather to the suffering wrought in their souls by the two-edged sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. How deeply it had pierced their souls, and the blessed results of their sorrow, in repentance and restoration, he refers to further on in the epistle.

Verse 8, "For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia," &c. Thus he goes on to tell them about his troubles, showing the confidence he had in them, notwithstanding the way in which he had been treated by them. His confidence is that the grace of God in them will cause them to have sympathy with him in his troubles and to pray for him.

Asia is that province of Asia Minor in which the seven churches were situated which are addressed in the book of Revelation. Ephesus was one of these; and it was probably

to what happened to him there that he refers here as well as in 1 Cor. xv. 32. A great door and effectual had been opened to him there, but, as usual, where God is working in power, there were "many adversaries."

Verse 9, "**But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.**"

Paul knew what it was to be handed over for death. He had been stoned and left for dead (Acts xiv. 19), and this kind of experience was not a strange thing to him. As he said: "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter;" "I die daily"; "We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake."

Thus, if man sentenced him to die, the sentence had been anticipated in his own inmost soul; the death sentence had already been passed within. His confidence was thus in the God of resurrection and in Him alone.

In these days of ease and peace, when persecution is hardly known, we are too apt to forget that we are called into the fellowship of a rejected Christ. We forget that the call which sets before us, as joint-heirs with Christ, His heavenly glory as our hope, sets before us here the denial of self, the taking up of the cross and the following of Him outside the camp.

Verse 10, "**Who delivered us from so great a death.**" This I take to correspond with 1 Thess. i. 10: "Who delivered us from the wrath to come."

The believer is doubly delivered from death: he is delivered from that death in trespasses and sins in which the Gospel found him, and he is delivered from that terrible coming judgment of "the second death," the lake of fire, where there is, not extinction of being, but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth—the worm that never dies, the fire that never is quenched, the conscious torment in which even a drop of consolation is denied.

"**And doth deliver.**" We are the subjects of daily deliverance. The apostle knew it well. Referring to what might be called his miraculous deliverances, he makes out quite a long list, and doubtless he saw the hand of God as plainly day by day delivering from temptations and snares as well as dangers. Those who are in the heart of Africa can tell

of many and marvellous deliverances, but so can those even in these quiet parts where life and property are so comparatively safe. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." So ends Ps. cvii., which from first to last is an epitome of the providential dealings of Jehovah with His people.

"**In whom we trust that He will yet deliver.**" Thus he counted upon the same faithful care that had delivered in the past to keep and deliver him until his work on earth was done. In 2 Tim. iv. 6, with the end of his course just in sight, he says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Such language forbids the thought of "deliverance." It is not "so great a death," but an "offering" and a "departure."

Preserved amid dangers innumerable and inconceivable until the fight was fought and the course finished, he seems hardly to take account of that death, the sentence of which he had borne so long within. The next deliverance is **RESURRECTION**. He knows the Lord will come, the Great Deliverer, and bestow upon him the victor's crown.

"Oh how will recompense His smile  
The sufferings of this little while."

### Preparation for Conflict.

"Put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. ii. 11). Christians, young ones especially, who have not yet learned that they will have to stand in "an evil day," and are living in theory, have not "put on the whole armour of God." When living near God, and practically in conflict, they learn something of the "wiles of the devil," and their need of the panoply. For instance, if we pray without searching the Word, or search the Word without prayer, guidance cannot be expected; for Christ said, "If My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Conscious weakness teaches us that we cannot meet an enemy *with the Word*, unless leaning prayerfully on Christ. Satan is full of subtlety; and, to discern his wiles, we must see if the thing proposed lead us into disobedience to God. When we lean on Christ the victory is gained.

W. G. S.

## PAUL TO PHILEMON ;

OR

## The First Anti-slavery Petition.

(CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 101.)

THE same idea—"profitable to thee and to me" (verse 11)—is worked out in the succeeding verses. Only we must rectify the unfortunate modification introduced by the copyists in verse 12—"thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels," which is an anticipation of the request in verse 17. According to the best manuscripts, verse 12 ought to read simply, "whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is my very heart (or mine own bowels)." This expression is very common in Latin (*mea viscera, cor meum*), meaning that which fills my heart. The sense is: He is one with me in such a way that whatever you do to gladden him, my bowels will feel it as if done to myself."

Verses 13, 14 enlarge on this idea of the value of Onesimus to Paul himself. He would fain have kept him in Rome, all the more that his captivity rendered such help very needful to him. But he had refrained, not wishing to anticipate that which Philemon might feel prompted to do of his own accord, in granting the apostle this welcome help. Paul does not wish to take Onesimus away from Philemon. If he is privileged to have his help, it shall be as a living proof of Philemon's affection for himself.

In verse 13 the apostle says "that in thy behalf (*up'ér sou*) he might minister unto me." This explains verses 15, 16, in which Paul enlarges on what Onesimus is to become to Philemon himself. Providence had perhaps permitted all that had happened in order that the temporary relation of master and slave, in which Philemon and Onesimus had stood to each other, might be exchanged for the eternal relationship of brothers in the Lord. Not that Philemon must on that account necessarily keep Onesimus with him; on the contrary, Paul has just hinted (verses 13, 14) at his hope that Philemon might perhaps spare Onesimus to him. But in this way the master would really benefit by the service of his slave; for the services which Onesimus would render to Paul in his Roman prison would be the very same kind offices which Philemon himself would gladly do him if he could. This is the

explanation of the words, "on thy behalf," in verse 13. In verse 16 Paul says, "a brother beloved specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord." These words show how little even slavery excluded the gentler domestic affections. Onesimus is henceforward beloved by Paul as by no one else ("specially to me") unless it be by Philemon, in whom the old affection of the master will now be reinforced by the new affection of the brother in Christ ("both in the flesh and in the Lord"). Before leaving this passage, which is one of inimitable grace and delicacy, we may call attention to the word "*perhaps*" at the beginning of verse 15. The apostle is going to try and show the good results of the parting "for a season" of Onesimus from his master. But it is always very difficult to interpret the ways of Providence, especially when man's own misdoing has to be taken into the category of causes working for good. Therefore, feeling that it might be rather startling to Philemon to represent Onesimus' offence in this light, Paul discreetly adds "*perhaps*." God might no doubt have brought about the conversion of Onesimus by some other means; but as a matter of fact He had condescended thus to overrule evil for good.

After these preliminaries, each one of which has its due weight in the balance, the apostle at length comes (verses 17-21) to the request he wants to make. He has reminded Philemon who it is that asks—Paul the aged and a prisoner; he has said who it is for whom he pleads—his own son in the faith, and henceforth a brother to Philemon, one capable of doing immense service to the apostle in the great work laid upon him, and which is dearer than aught else to the heart of Philemon also. He thus comes in verse 17 to the request which is the keynote of this short epistle. "If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself." Let us imagine Paul arriving at Colosse and knocking at Philemon's door. What rejoicings there would be through the whole household, alike in master and slaves! What delight in all hearts, on all faces! Just such a welcome he now asks for the wandering sheep that has come back to the fold. His request is not only for pardon and complete restoration, but also for the welcome of a brother in the household of faith.

There remains however one dark spot on the picture. Onesimus had caused considerable loss to Philemon, either by his own dishonesty or by the results of his negligence. In any case the loss had not been made good. Here then Paul offers himself as security for the reparation which is still due. "If he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account." This offer might scarcely appear serious. In order that his reader may see that it is so, Paul repeats emphatically, "I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it."

*Bonâ fide* as the offer is, it is clear that the apostle thinks it impossible that Philemon will accept it; therefore he adds: "that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides"; which evidently implies that beyond the remission of this debt, Philemon owes himself, all that he is and all that he has, to Paul, inasmuch as he owes to him his eternal salvation.

In contrast to such unworthy conduct on the part of Philemon as demanding the payment of this debt by Paul (who has, even in that case, taken the burden upon his own shoulders and released Onesimus), the apostle goes on to describe in loving words what he really expects from his old convert: "Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ." It is in Christ that he pleads; in Christ that he hopes to gain a hearing; and this granting of his request will remove any uneasiness he might have felt for his dear son Onesimus. He hopes for even more than the obedience to which he feels he has a just claim. He is confident that Philemon will do beyond what he asks. Paul had clearly asked him to give up Onesimus to him for the work of an evangelist. Now it is perfectly plain that such a gift must imply the liberation of Onesimus, and that this is what Paul means by the words, "knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say." The apostle has been accused of sanctioning the institution of slavery by restoring to his master a slave who had escaped from the yoke. On the contrary, the way in which Paul sends him back, reminding his master that it is not a slave, but one better than a slave, a brother beloved, who returns to him, contains the moral premisses from which must follow, not only the immediate emanci-

pation of that one slave, but the ultimate abrogation of slavery itself.

We have seen that the epistles of Paul usually conclude with some personal references, greetings and commissions to the various brethren. It is so in this epistle. There is something very touching in the request to Philemon in verse 22. Paul has just been asking him to receive Onesimus as himself; now he adds, as though with a smile, "withal prepare me also a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you."

The salutations contained in verses 23, 24 are the same as those in the Epistle to the Colossians, with the exception of those addressed to the church at Colosse generally and to neighbouring churches. These would have been inappropriate in a private letter.

After this detailed study of this short epistle, which is at once so simple and so *naïf*, so full of heart and fine of wit; so appropriate to the particular circumstances, and, with all its playfulness, so earnest, we find it difficult to understand how any critic could ever have been found to call in question its genuineness. This has been done, however.

We are now in a position to estimate the full importance of this short Scripture, and to pay our tribute to the wisdom of those who were not afraid to give it a place in the canon of the New Testament. It brings out two points of inestimable value and interest. First: It shows us what St. Paul was in little things. We know what he was in the treatment of great principles, and in carrying out the main work of his life, his mission to the Gentiles. But there are many great philanthropists who have undertaken to reform the world, and yet in their private life have shown themselves the proudest, most hard and self-seeking of men. In theory they have been full of the love of humanity; in fact, full of self-love. The Divine charity which the love of God had enkindled in the heart of Paul showed itself in little unnoticed things no less than in the great overt acts of his public life. We see him in this letter concerned (and with what tender solicitude!) for the reception which a poor guilty slave would meet with from his master. He writes in his behalf a letter as carefully considered, both in form and substance, as those which he addressed to the

churches of Rome and of Corinth. He throws as much heart into it as if the gravest interests of his apostleship were involved. And in order to show the importance he attached to it, instead of dictating it, as was his custom, he writes it with his own hand. Such is the difference between true Christian love and that of mere humanitarian reformers.

This epistle brings out secondly the marked difference between the Gospel method of action and the way in which men set to work to accomplish social revolutions. It was not by calling on the unhappy slaves to rise in armed rebellion against their masters that the Gospel struck off their fetters. It rather melted them by the fervour of Christian love, and so penetrated society with the principles of the Gospel that emancipation became a necessity.

The Epistle to Philemon was the first indication of the tendency in this direction, and may therefore be fairly called the first petition in favour of the abolition of slavery. In this respect Wilberforce was but a follower of St. Paul.

G.

I quite agree with you, dear brother: we need the repeated humbling, heartsearching, and raising of heart to God to keep us empty and weak enough to be filled and used. All our teaching and preaching without it is the sounding brass, and nothing more. It signifies nothing, either in God's ear or man's, and nothing pleases the enemy like such a fair show in the flesh.

What is outward work, if we allow our own spiritual life to languish? Shallow and interrupted communion with God results in little or no recognition from Him. It was not in works, surely, that Ephesus failed, and it was not for works, surely, that Philadelphia was commended. "I know them" is all the Lord says about the latter, but they were endeared by affection and rendered effectual by *His* fellowship and help, for it is the only Assembly He says He shares the labours of, among the seven. All the great works of Ephesus are lowered by lack of love—all the poor works of Philadelphia endeared to Christ's heart by the truth of affection out of which they flowed. We never know or feel our own weakness or need of Him when prayerless or out of communion.—*From Letters of late Dr. Mulock.*

### Condition of Heart and Soul in Relation to Assembly Fellowship.

**I**N these days of increasing difficulty, the importance of a healthy condition of spiritual life cannot be over estimated.

In the very earliest days of church life it is recorded of those who believed, that "they were all of one heart and of one soul" (Acts iv. 32). And in our desire to have a scriptural fellowship existing amongst the various churches over the land, let us beware of beginning with the shell and overlooking the kernel of all genuine Christian and assembly fellowship. How much might have been included in the "apostles' doctrine," or teaching, it may be difficult to say; but one thing is clear, the substance of their teaching was the person and work of the Lord Jesus. "That same Jesus" whom the Jews had crucified was "both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). God, the Father, had raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand; and, on the ground of His acceptance there, the Holy Spirit was sent down to give the apostles power to testify of Him, and to unite all who believed unto Him and to one another. The burden of the apostles' teaching was, that Jesus of Nazareth was God's anointed; and through Him, and in His Name, they were commissioned to preach repentance and remission of sins to His very murderers. It was the reception of this testimony by the energy of the Holy Spirit that bound the hearts of those who believed unto Him, and knit their hearts to one another. The apprehension of the glory of His person, and the fulness that was in Him to meet their need as convicted sinners, gathered all their hearts unto Him as their one common centre. Probably they knew very little of His will concerning the order of the "House of God"; but there is no doubt every jot and tittle they did know was sacred to their hearts.

Before He died He said, "If ye love ME keep My commandments" (John xiv. 15). It was this principle in full operation that produced the happy fellowship which existed at first; and this result flowed out of it: that "every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John v. 1). The doctrine of the One Body must not be

overlooked here. The Holy Spirit had come down not only as the power of testimony, but also that in Him all who believed should be baptised into One Body. It is probable they did not *understand* this doctrine, but they evidently were so under the power of the Holy Spirit that they *felt* it and *lived* it out. Unless the heart is under the power of the love of Christ, the conscience quickened into lively exercise by the power of grace, and the will under the control of the Spirit of God, there can be no real fellowship amongst saints, nor amongst assemblies. Man may attempt to construct something resembling it; but the fellowship which existed at first can only be produced by the same causes, otherwise it will not be the same thing. Let us not undervalue the truth as to church order; but it is one thing to use such truth in order to *direct* a Divine fellowship into scriptural channels, and it is quite another principle to attempt to *constitute* a church fellowship by merely copying primitive practices.

Saints in the present age are a "heavenly" people, and fellowship amongst them is a heavenly principle, and must flow from communion with, and subjection to, the living Head of the church who is in heaven. Let every word and every precept that God has written concerning the order of His house have our most careful study and our most implicit obedience; but let it never be pressed on others in the spirit of *making* a bond of fellowship of truth that was given in order to *regulate* fellowship. What is needed is that the consciences of those who compose the assemblies be brought into subjection to Christ. Without that all will continue to be confusion; and to attempt to enforce truth on hearts and consciences that are not right with God will only make bigots on the one hand and repel slow learners on the other. Nothing but "dwelling in the secret place of the Most High" will keep us in the midst of the path in these days of conflicting teaching. Unless we have Christ enthroned in our hearts, and are studying the word under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will either trifle with truth by holding it loosely, or we will misuse it by carrying it out in a spirit, and manner which will violate the sacredness of the Christian's conscience.

G. A.

## THRICE "PEACE BE UNTO YOU."

(CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 97).

READ again that 19th verse. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." Consider what that fear means. They were a little, little band in that busy, proud, hostile city, with the most dangerous surroundings; for only three days before that city, with wild clamour, had murdered their Master. Imagine the disturbed state of a city like this, if only three days before, the citizens had murdered their governor. And not so only, but they would stamp out the very sect from off the earth. "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes," He had said, "lacked ye anything"? And they must answer, "Nothing." "But when once they have numbered Me with the transgressors, you will find a very different state of things. If they have murdered Me, they will certainly seek to murder you." "Behold I send you forth as sheep among wolves;" and there is nothing more exactly like it than what we have here. A little flock amid wolves of Saul-like men, breathing out their threatenings against them. Suppose that you saw a flock of ten or twenty sheep, and all around it a huge pack of wolves. Ah, you would say, there will soon be an end of them. Such, then, was the condition of this little band. And they had shut themselves into this little chamber, and would seem to have stored it with the necessary food; for in Luke xxiv., when the Lord asks them, "Have you any meat?" they can at once produce of the supply they had laid up, that they might not have to go out into that murderous city. They thought that if only they could wait a few days the city would quiet down, and then they would slink away by night into the Judæa hills. It was one short, brief opportunity, and the blessed Lord came down and seized it at once. He who was so ready to wash their feet when their defilement made it needful, when their condition showed their state of mind now, was equally ready to meet their need. Ah, friends, what a golden opportunity, and what a Divine use the Master makes

of it. "What does this fast shut door mean?" He would say, "what these barricaded windows?" "Peter, are you afraid of what men can do? of that clamorous city outside?" "Are you afraid to die, John? They may bring their battering-rams and soon burst in and murder you all as sheep; are you afraid?" Ah, that question! And let us remember that it is a test for your soul and mine. Am I afraid of what man can do? In that same Matt. x., the Master says to His disciples, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul"; and here He finds His own dear flock filled with this very kind of fear. Ere we are aware of it, we cling to life more than it becomes us as saints. We are accustomed to guard round our lives carefully and anxiously; and look with pleasure at the defences of a country like this, whose shores have never known an invader within living memory; and carefully do we provide for the morrow's need. *Alas, when these become the trust of saints, rather than their life in Jesus.*

What does the Master do? He opens His hands, and shows these nail-print wounds. "Who did this? didn't these murderers outside?" And pushing aside His resurrection dress He shows where the murderous spear went in. "Have they harmed Me? They only sent Me the quicker home to My Father above." "Can they harm you?" Oh, what a Master! "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." Not when they saw the barriers; because the question would arise, Are they strong enough? Not when they thought of the provision they had stored up; because they might ask, Would it last long enough? That could not give peace; it never could. No, beloved, our peace is this: that the sting of death is taken away for you and for me. 1 Cor. xv. tells us that we are baptised in the room of the dead; but if that is the triumph of the beginning, what is the triumph of the end? "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Now, none knows how soon danger to life may encompass you and me; the danger to the outside quiet of our circumstances is greater every day. Where is our peace? Not that deposit in the bank, not the kind friends who can give me shelter if I need

it, not the fact that I am young and in good health, with energy to go forth into new spheres. This it is: that our life is hid with Him, and not below. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Who can touch that life? And here is a peace in spite of all that the world can possibly do against you. Blessed peace! There is an ancient fable of a hero, who was invulnerable except in one heel, and by an arrow-wound in that heel that conqueror died. But you have not a spot which is vulnerable, whatever the world can do against you. "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." Pray for me, and I for you, that God's own peace against a frowning world may garrison our hearts every day.

"I laugh at famine, smile at fear,  
While telling all my riches o'er;  
I see my Lord and Shepherd near,  
And in His fulness find my store."

Fulness of peace, by the blood, as touching my conscience; fulness of victory over the grave, as touching my circumstances upon earth. If you want peace as you walk down city streets, take care that you see the Lord. If you want peace in your family work, in your shop work, in your workshop work, under all the gathering evils, always have Jesus in view; though they cast you out because you won't join in the guilty ways of their guilty strikes. "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us"; but only *through Him*. Ah, if we go back to the days of the early church, the days of the catacombs of Rome, when the saints of God had to live under ground, what a truth we find written upon these walls, "*Pax vobiscum*" ("Peace be with you").—*Notes of Address by H. Dyer.*

WE hope to be much in prayer—alone with God, the place of power—until we see you. Above all do I thank you for the assurance of your intercession, for it is the fruit of that intercession which is unwearied, and which the true King and Priest (typified by Aaron and Hur) ever fulfils in the presence of God for us.—*From Letters of late Dr. Mulock.*

### Where did the Wise Men from the East Find and Worship the Child Jesus?

THE apparent contradictions in scripture, when rightly examined, are constantly found to be precious means of proving to our hearts the perfections of those peerless writings which our God has given us, and well suited to lead us more and more to bring everything to the test of its unerring directions.

Several such "apparent" contradictions have lately been brought forward, but the present one, referring as it does to a part of our blessed Lord's life here on earth, may, for that reason, claim special interest; the more so, as a universal belief among saints and sinners stands in the way of the solution of it.

The "contradiction" referred to is found in Matt. ii. 13, and Luke ii. 22, 39. In Matthew, it appears that Joseph flees with "the young child and His mother" from Bethlehem into Egypt; whereas in Luke, they go from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and from there to Nazareth. The journey to Egypt is not mentioned in Luke. The universal belief, artists' illustrations, and men's writings, have generally taken the account in Matthew without any regard to Luke, and hence the "adoration of the King" has been supposed to have taken place in the stable at Bethlehem only a few days after the birth of Jesus; and, as long as this is done, no solution is possible. But scripture does not bear this out; on the contrary.

In Matt. ii. 1 we read: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem." The rendering of the verb in the first sentence has, no doubt, done not a little to produce the before-mentioned wrong impression. Instead of "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem," it would more correctly read: "Jesus having been born" (J. N. D.'s translation); that is a simple statement that He *had been* born in that place, and not an indication of the time of the wise men's arrival in Jerusalem, except so far as it shows that it was *after* His birth. But a consideration of the circumstances, and the scriptures bearing on the subject, will show that they did not arrive in Jerusalem till nearly two years after the birth of the Lord Jesus, when, according to Luke, Joseph and Mary dwelt no longer at Bethlehem, but at Nazareth.

In Luke ii. 21, 22, we read: "And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising Him; His name was called Jesus, which was so called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought Him up to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord"; hence (*cf.*, Lev. xii.), about forty-one days after the birth of Jesus they went up to Jerusalem, from whence (Luke ii. 39) "they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." If, therefore, the wise men came and worshipped at Bethlehem, Jesus could hardly have been two months old; whereas, from careful inquiry, Herod gathered from the wise men that the child Jesus must have been at that time about two years old (Matt. ii. 7-16).

The wise men had seen a star in the east which told them of the birth of the "King of the Jews," but evidently this star did not guide them to Jerusalem—indeed, was not needed, as they surely would know to seek the King of the Jews in the land of the Jews, and naturally go to Jerusalem, the capital of that country. If the direction received from Herod had been right, they would still not have required the guidance of the star; but this being wrong, they were truly in need of guidance, and such, we read, they get, for: "They, having heard the king, went their way; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east" (and evidently not since) "went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" (Matt. ii. 9, 10). That this star led them to Nazareth we gather from Luke ii., and this is not contradicted in anywise by Matthew or any other scripture. The slaughter of the children at Bethlehem was hence a perfectly useless act of cruelty on Herod's part; and if he had confined himself to this, Joseph needed not have fled to Egypt. But God knew that Herod would not content himself with this, but search till he had found Him; wherefore we read that Joseph is not allowed to return to his country till Herod was dead, because not till then could the angel say that "they are dead that sought the young child's life" (Matt. ii. 20). We gather, then, that the wise men came to Nazareth, and there worshipped Him who was born King of the Jews, when the child Jesus



was about two years old ; and that Joseph was directed to flee into Egypt not because of the slaughter at Bethlehem, but because Herod would “*seek* the young child to destroy Him,” which is proved by Joseph not being allowed to return till Herod was dead.

Nazareth is not mentioned in Matthew till after the return from Egypt ; but this is entirely in character with this gospel. Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Judæa, we read, and this is just what is wanted to prove Him the Christ, the Messiah: “And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah ; for out of thee shall come forth a Governor, which shall be shepherd of my people Israel.” Then He goes to Egypt to fulfil another scripture, and returns to dwell at Nazareth to fulfil a third scripture. This gives the Lord as the Messiah, in Matt. ii., the appearance of belonging entirely to Bethlehem, though we know from Luke that He was only born there and remained there about forty-one days, till Mary could enter the temple at Jerusalem. But there is not a single word in the second chapter of Matthew which contradicts the account in Luke that He was brought up in Nazareth. Here, as everywhere in scripture, one part must not be taken apart from the other. Each has a special meaning as it is rendered in its own connection ; but the actual facts have to be ascertained by comparing one with another. Luke is as correct as Matthew, and Matthew as Luke, but the truth can only be found by taking the two together.

COPENHAGEN.

T. R. E.

“**God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure**”

(2 Samuel xxiii. 5).

IN “the last words of David,” when looking back upon his past experience of God, we find him using the language of exultation. True, he found things in his house very different from what he desired. Adonijah had rebelled ; yet it was turned into blessing, as it cast him more upon God. There are seasons when the people of God feel that nothing short of almighty strength can meet their need. David is sustained in all his trouble by the assurance of a “covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” This contrast makes trouble precious, and checks our desire to get out of it. It keeps the soul patiently waiting for “the morning without clouds.”

W. G. S.

## THE WORD OF LIFE : Its Relation to the Believer.

By J. HIXON IRVING.

“*THE WORD OF LIFE*” (1 John i. 3).

“*The Word of Life*” (Phil. ii. 16).

VI. To describe the way in which it  
CLEANSES life.

WE have already noticed that one of the titles given to Christ is “The Word of God” (Rev. xix. 13). This title sets forth His judicial character when He shall come forth with the armies of heaven to judge the apostate nations of earth. It is not a little suggestive that, when the convictive action of the word is spoken of, the designation should be “The Word of God” (Heb. iv. 12). Here is perfection. It is not quite the “sword of the Spirit” aspect of the truth, though near akin to it. The “sword” is that phase of the truth used by the believer against the foes of his spiritual life without ; this is the word used against the evil within, and the user is “The Word of God” in His priestly character. One proof of the profitableness of the Word of Life is that of its power to “convict” (2 Tim. iii. 16 ; iv. 2). True conviction, whether it be the conviction of the sinner for salvation, or the saint unto practical sanctification, is brought about by the instrumentality of the Word. Conviction by the Word, for correction and cleansing of the life, is a life-long process. There is no finality in conviction, no more than there is in growth. And if the truth of God is allowed full sway in the soul, it will, with its eyes of flame, piercing into the hidden recesses of the heart, reveal many a hidden idol and spiritual abomination—reveal, in order that they may be cast out, so that the Spirit of Christ may have entire possession and full control of the life. The convictive action of the Word must of necessity precede its cleansing action.

The Divine method is not to heal slightly, but to heal thoroughly, and hence the sharp knife aspect of it ; or, in other words, conviction for evil goes before cleansing from it. Few thoughtful believers would question that, whilst the laver of the tabernacle was a type of Christ and the Holy Spirit, it was also in a subordinate sense a type of the Word of God.

Perhaps it may be more accurate to say that the water in the vessel was emblematic of the truth in its moral aspect of cleansing the external life of the believer. In order to thoroughly grasp the substance, it may be well to look a little closer at the outlines of the shadow. You remember how Jehovah ordered Moses, in consecrating the priesthood, to bring Aaron and his sons before the door of the tabernacle and strip them, then bathe them all over with water. This was done before they were clothed with the priestly vestments, or permitted to minister at the brazen altar, or enter into the sanctuary. This was "a once for all" thing, and was never repeated, and was symbolic of the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 6), which every child of God is the subject of. That washing is a perfected thing; and this is taught in type in the washing of the priests on the day of their consecration. But whilst the priests were bathed all over on the day of their consecration, a thing which was never repeated, yet they had to daily wash their hands and their feet in the laver water in order to interrupted service (Exod. xxx. 19-21). Defilement, suspended service—washing restored it. Teaching us in type this lesson: that sin brings a suspension of communion, and that sin judged in the light of the Word, confessed and forsaken, restores the broken fellowship with God. This was set forth in symbolic action by our Lord Himself on the night of His sorrow (John xiii.), where we see His sevenfold action in rising from the table, laying aside His garments; taking a towel, girding His loins with it; pouring water into a basin, washing the feet of His disciples, and finishing by wiping them dry with the towel. Before this septiform act of service was completed, the following conversation took place between the Master and His quick, sanguine disciple:—"Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" and hardly allowing time for our Lord's reply to his words, he said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." It was the "far be it from thee" spirit again dominant in the rapid-spoken fisherman. But when he heard the Master's solemn *sine qua non*, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," he replied in his impulsive but practical manner, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands

and my head." And now there falls from the lips of the Girded Servant, words of beauty and power, and which bear directly on the theme before us. "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The former "bathing" harmonises with the action of the "once for all" cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, removing at one mighty sweep all the guilt of sin from the soul, with its consequent doom, eternal death; whilst the latter "washing" indicates the cleansing of the believer's works and ways by the action of the Word of God, as used by the Lord, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The former, like regeneration, is a past and completed thing; the latter is as constant as the need is continual. The one is perfect, the other is progressive. Hence we see that what we have in type in the daily washing of the hands and feet of the priests, in order to uninterrupted service, we have set forth in striking and expressive symbolism in the action of Jesus in washing the dust-stained feet of His followers, not omitting the perfidious bag-bearer, Judas. What He did in symbolism on the night of His deep sorrow, He is still doing in a spiritual sense towards His own; for He is still the Girded Servant though the heavens have received Him for a short season. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Defilement on the part of the believer, whilst it does not bring guilt, and, consequently, does not suspend life or salvation, yet it interrupts fellowship and brings weakness and darkness into the soul; and not until, through the action of the word in power upon the conscience, leading to a confession and renunciation of the cause—which is no light or easy thing, but a deep moral work in the soul. Can the broken cord be taken up again, and the interrupted ministry of the *Holy Spirit* be again experienced in its joy and power. Having seen to the cleansing of our own way by taking heed to the Word, we have yet another responsibility to fulfil, viz., to become workers together with Christ in washing the feet of saints according to His

words and example. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." How may we discharge this responsibility? How may we embrace the privilege? If we find a child of God given to occasional or habitual levity of speech, shall we not wait for a fitting opportunity to whisper in his ear, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearer" (Eph. iv. 29); or one possessing a harsh, unforgiving spirit, and not in tender tones say to them, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. iv. 32); or, again, one of the saints of God getting their spiritual life chilled with the withering night frosts of world-love, and not warm them in the love of the Lord, in such words as these—"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. 15-17)? If we see a child of God suddenly overtaken in a fault, shall we not seek to restore such a one, remembering the danger we are exposed to from the satanic wiles? We must remember our responsibility does not end with having cleansed our own way merely, but we are in measure responsible "to wash one another's feet." What God-like work, what Christ-like toil, washing saints' feet is; yet, how few comparatively seem to covet such a service. But what a rich reward awaits those who in the love of the Lord and the power of the Spirit undertake and pursue it.

One word in closing. O child of God, *revere* the Word because it contains life; *love* it, for through it life has been conveyed to thee; *meditate* upon it, because it is the food of the life which it has imparted. *Submit* to its controlling power; *yield* to its claims upon thee; *bring* thy defilement beneath its cleansing power, and then thou wilt experience the truth of this scripture: "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee" (Prov. vi. 22).

*Note.*—These articles on "THE WORD OF LIFE in its sixfold relation to the Believer" will shortly be issued in small book form, at One Penny. Other papers by same author will follow.

## PIPING AND DANCING; or, Jacob's Answer to the Salutation of Heaven.

(See Gen. xxxii.)

IT is a blessed thing, not only to be obedient to precept, and watchful against evil, but to have the heart so answerable to the appeal of God, as *to catch the tone of it*, and reflect the very complexion of His dealing with us. Blessed, when we dance to His piping, and lament to His mourning. For this is service *in spirit*, and not merely with the hand or the foot.

Jacob, for instance, failed in this service in spirit, in this answer of the heart to the tone of God's appeal at Mahanaim. It was a great moment; the occasion was a very fine one. Angelic hosts were sent to salute the anointed heir of the Lord on his return to his promised inheritance. Heaven was giving a witness that it shared in the joy of such a moment, and watched with the interests of this elect one. Nothing, therefore, but an exulting spirit of confidence and praise befitted such a moment: so distinguished an occasion should have been answered by a shout of triumph in the soul. The Lord was piping, and Jacob should have danced; but he did not: his soul was not up to the occasion. He used it as though the Lord were mourning to him. He begins to fear Esau, and to pray about danger, instead of answering the salutation of the hosts of God, by going onward in a spirit of victory and joy.

We all, alas! behave too much in this way of Jacob, in the answer we make to the appeal of God in the Gospel: for it is blessed. The delight which God takes in the work of Christ for us sinners is finely expressed through Scripture, as I may incidentally notice.

I. Prov. viii. 30, 31, lets us know that this delight filled the Divine mind *before the world began*. For Wisdom, or Christ, was then set up in connection with sinners, or the children of men, and He was God's "delight."

II. So Gen. viii. 21 tells us of the same delight in *early patriarchal days*. For it was the blood or sacrifice of Christ, preached by Noah, which drew forth this fervent utterance from the heart of the Lord God.

III. Lev. ix. 23, 24, Ex. xi. 34, 2 Chron. vii. 1, publish the same on different occasions *during the time of Israel*. Because, the

fire from heaven, and the glory (symbols of the Divine approval and presence) in their action on these occasions, declare their delight in such occasions. And what were those events (the raising of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, and the consecration of the priest) but so many typical exhibitions of Christ in His ways for us?

IV. Matt. iii. 17 witnesses the same in *Gospel times*. Christ was just going forth, the minister of grace, in works and services for poor sinners; and the Father, with the richest emphasis, seals His whole soul's delight in such a moment.

V. Matt. xxvii. 51 is like testimony. Christ had now finished the work which, at the time of the preceding scriptures, He was beginning; and this rending of the veil, without a moment's delay, speaks the delight and fervency with which *all heaven* greeted the work finished for sinners.

Such are among the witnesses to the delight which the blessed God takes in the Gospel, or the work of Christ for sinners. Such is the "piping"; and "dancing," or joy, and a spirit of liberty and praise, is our proper answer to it. As when the glory and the fire appeared, in Lev. ix., the congregation fell on their faces, and shouted.\*

And in that case of Jacob, I may observe, that he was brought to a better mind. With his condition of soul, already noticed, the Lord had a controversy. *In the Divine ear there was discord*. Piping had been answered by lamentation. The Lord, therefore, wrestles with him, contends with him, rebukes him; and Jacob is put into another state of mind.

This happy process begins at once. Jacob does not faint under the rebuke: he holds the Wrestler of the night fast. The Divine Stranger then tries his faith by withering the hollow of his thigh by a touch: Jacob still holds on, "faint yet pursuing." Then the Wrestler tries his faith again, asking for liberty to go, showing that He was ready to put an end to the strife: *Jacob will not hear*

\*Another fine answer of dancing to piping is made by the disciples at the close of Luke xxiv. The risen Lord displays and rehearses to them the precious fruit of all His sorrows, and then leaves them in the very act of blessing them with uplifted hands. Glorious attitude, full of heaven to them! Their souls answer it with great joy and sacrifices of praise.

of that; he acts in the understanding of this secret—that *our blessing is God's purpose*. He therefore makes *his profit*, rather than the *Stranger's pleasure*, his rule, and refuses to let Him go till He blest him.

O happy understanding of the heart of Christ! This was "dancing," indeed, in the spirit of his mind. All is harmony now. The "piping" has got its due answer; and Christ blesses him, instead of wrestling with him; and Jacob pursues his way in the light of the face of the Lord. He crosses the plain, calling it Peniel, "the face of God"; glorying in that mystery, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Was not that dancing? Was not that journeying with so light and triumphant a heart, as suited the piping of the Lord in the angelic salutation? *All is harmony now, where all before had been discord*. The exercise of soul under the wrestling had rejected everything. The fearless footstep of the patriarch over Peniel was the due responsive dance to the music at Mahanaim.

This discipline or wrestling had not to correct or change the *path* which Jacob was treading. He pursues it still—the very same path which he had trod before; but it had to correct the *spirit* in which it was pursued. "The Father of spirits" is our disciplining God.

---

## THE LORD'S DAY.

HAIL! happy day, whose dawning rays  
Saw Jesus leave the grave,  
Raised by the Father's power and grace—  
A Conqueror strong to save.

At eve, thy shadows gathered round  
A little weeping band,  
In fellowship of sorrow bound  
Together heart and hand.

Glad tidings had to them been brought,  
But were not then believed;  
Such words but idle tales they thought,  
And feared to be deceived.

When, suddenly, the Master's form  
Within their circle stood;  
They saw, but trembled with alarm—  
None knew or understood.

But soon His words, "Peace, peace to you,"  
 Dispelled all faithless fear ;  
 They owned at last the record true,  
 Since He Himself was near.

He said, "Behold My hands and feet" ;  
 "Look on the nail-prints there."  
 (Salvation finished, full, complete,  
 Still do those wounds declare.)

"My Father and My God is yours" :  
 With joy they heard His voice ;  
 Saw then what Jesus' death secures,  
 And in Him did rejoice.

That morn and evening, first of days,  
 May with none else compare ;  
 All light and joy, all truth and grace,  
 Were richly blended there.

Full forty days rolled on apace,  
 All fragrant with His love ;  
 Then He ascended to His place,  
 At God's right hand above.

Bright pearl of days, again thy dawn  
 Aroused the faithful few,  
 In fellowship together drawn,  
 Ere dried the morning dew.

Met in that well-beloved Name,  
 They prayed with one accord ;  
 Their hearts' desire, and words the same,  
 While waiting on the Lord.

When lo ! a rushing sound was heard,  
 Which swayed each heart and mind ;  
 As when the forest trees are stirred,  
 By some tempestuous wind.

Upon each head was plainly seen  
 A tongue of living fire ;  
 With that assembly to have been,  
 What saint would not desire ?

At once from them a living stream  
 In diverse language flowed ;  
 Their joyful and enraptured theme—  
 The risen Son of God.

Soon myriads of inquiring eyes  
 Were fixed upon that band ;  
 And strangers heard, with glad surprise,  
 The story old and grand.

The Word was preached in mighty power,  
 It entered many a heart ;

Till thousands felt, that morning hour,  
 Conviction's first keen smart.

And when the sun at last went down,  
 Succeeding that fair morn,  
 Three thousand alien hearts were won,  
 Three thousand souls twice born.

Sweet is the memory of that day,  
 Nor shall its influence cease ;  
 It may not pass or know decay,  
 For He must still increase.

The rushing mighty wind has passed,  
 The tongues of fire no more,  
 As with a silver trumpet blast  
 Resound from shore to shore.

Yet still we hail thy rising light,  
 Thou resurrection day,  
 When we may turn with fresh delight  
 From Egypt's toil away.

Still by the Holy Spirit led,  
 Meet we in Jesus' name ;  
 Still drink the cup and break the bread,  
 Bear His reproach and shame.

Truth's banner, giv'n to be displayed,  
 Is still by grace unfurled ;  
 His people wave it undismayed  
 Before a hostile world.

And though the ancient power is not,  
 God owns the still small voice  
 In souls by His own Spirit taught  
 In Jesus to rejoice.

We bless the Lord for thy return,  
 Of days the first and best :  
 A well of joy to hearts that mourn,  
 An Elim shade of rest.

It may be that some morning hour  
 Of thine, O hallowed day,  
 The Lord will come in glorious power  
 To call His bride away.

It may be when we're gathered 'round  
 The sacred festal board,  
 That all may suddenly be found  
 For ever with the Lord.

Amen, and yet again amen  
 Responds each faithful one ;  
 A never-ending Lord's-day then  
 Will be for us begun.

## Correspondence.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FROM LABOURERS.

A BROTHER sends the following:—In these days, when it is to be feared not a few of those "who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. v. 17) are not accorded that amount of support in temporal things which is necessary, it becomes us to diligently exercise every godly means of keeping alive in the consciences of the saints their responsibility towards such.

In some "churches," when an acknowledgment is received from one to whose "necessity" they have contributed, we regret to say the letter is not read to the church, but merely perused by one or two of the leading brethren. In other "churches," such letters are always read to "the whole church." This latter we believe to be the scriptural order, and is calculated to encourage saints to further participation in so good a ministry. Phil. iv. 10-19 seems to be ample precept and precedent for this course. Overseeing brethren might please jot this in their memory, seeing to it that the church is duly informed of the thanks of the one communicated with.

### THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

WITH reference to the paper on this subject (see page 83), a correspondent, while acknowledging that He who was born of Mary was God from "the beginning," expresses his inability to see how He could be "*the Son of God*" before His birth into this world, and asks, "How could the Eternal and the Divine be born?" He does not seem to see that the acknowledgment that Christ was *God from the beginning* necessitates the recognition of the fact that the Eternal and Divine One was born into the world. *How* this could be, we are not required to understand; for, though the great fact is in no wise *contrary* to reason, it is altogether *above* our comprehension. But we must be careful to keep to Scripture in our expression of the truth, and then, while we shall not say that *God* was born of a woman, nor allow the title "Mother of God," which was given to Mary at the close of the fourth century, and is used by Romanists to this day, we shall steadfastly adhere to the truth that *He* who was born of a woman is God as well as man.

With regard to the title, "*Son of God*," the scriptures previously quoted, and others, show clearly that this great title was His before, and independently of, incarnation. It expresses His essential relationship to the Father, and if we were not to own the Son as the One who from everlasting was *the Son*, how could we think of God as *Father* from everlasting? Though we by no means imply that it is so with our correspondent, we would remark that it will generally be found that any mention of Christ being *God*, while there is a denial that He was the *Son of God* from eternity, involves a denial of the distinctness of the Persons in the Godhead, and also of the fact that, from the time of the incarnation, Christ is everywhere and always *both* God and man.

It seems unnecessary to repeat the scriptures already quoted, though we would again refer to Gal. iv., "God sent forth His Son" (verse 4), "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son" (verse 6). It may well be asked, concerning both the Son and the Holy Spirit, could

God send forth One who was not with Him? And surely it must be evident that, as the Spirit was the Spirit before He was sent forth, so the Son was the Son before He was sent forth, and therefore could say, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."

### VILLAGES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

IN view of the rapid closing in of this Day of Grace and the speedy Return of our Lord, I would remind you of the many around, who, still ignorant of their state before God, are passing on, seemingly at ease, indifferent as to their eternal destiny! Ought not the solemn warnings of Ezekiel xxxiii. 6-8 to ring in our ears and awaken us from the sleep into which Satan has lulled us? "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." "The night is far spent; the day is at hand." "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh."

In case you may feel a responsibility in this matter, I would draw your attention to the following simple service for the Lord.

There are many villages and hamlets in Great Britain where the sound of the glorious Gospel of God in all its simplicity is seldom, if ever, heard. If Christians to whom such places are known will send me lists containing the names and addresses of dwellers in such destitute districts, to each of these a lithographed or printed Gospel letter will be sent by post, free, and the Holy Spirit will guide the good seed of the Word into the prepared ground! Letters will also be sent to English-speaking residents in any part of the world. If you desire to help in this especial line of work, will you kindly send me the names and addresses of unsaved ones? and I will gladly send Gospel letters to such, and sample letters to you, if so desired.

Faithfully yours,

J. NEWCOMEN MOSTYN.

2 Prince of Wales Terrace,  
Bray, Co. Wicklow.

## Questions and Answers.

NOTE.—Owing to Glasgow Fair Holidays, we had to go to press earlier this month. Several answers are therefore held over.

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:—

Is it right for Christian parents to bring their children to the Breaking of Bread Meeting, and to furnish them with hymn

books to join in the singing? Further, is it scriptural to allow those to sing who have been put out of fellowship, but who come and occupy the back seats?

What would be the scriptural course for an assembly to take with a sister who persists (honestly believing it to be of God) in addressing mixed audiences of men and women?

Please explain Luke xxiii. 43 and xvi. 26.—When a Christian falls asleep in Jesus where does his soul go to? and, is it active or not?

Why is the tribe of Dan not mentioned in the list—Rev. vii. ?

Where there are converts in one place speaking different languages, mutually unintelligible—*e.g.*, Chinese, Malays, Tamils—would it be contrary to the Word of God to hold separate meetings for the Breaking of Bread on the Lord's-day?

When one believer is far from a gathering ought he alone to remember the Lord in the Breaking of Bread?

Does Deut. xxiii. 19, 20 forbid a brother in the Lord, in this dispensation, taking usury from another brother?

Do the words, "this day," in Ps. ii. 7, and quoted in Acts xiii. 33 and Heb. i. 5, refer to the incarnation or resurrection of Christ? and if it be either, how are the verses to be reconciled with the eternal Sonship of Christ?

#### "INTRODUCING" TO THE ASSEMBLY.

**QUESTION 358.**—What is the most convenient and scriptural mode for introducing those newly received to a large assembly, so that all may know them?

**Ans. A.**—It is very sad to witness the little care which one member has of another amongst the saints, and the indifference which many manifest when one is brought into the holy fellowship of a church of God; but it is doubtful if any particular "mode" would meet the felt need, especially as we have so little in the Word to guide us on this point. To those whose minds are open to conviction, it is clear, from Acts ix. 26-28 and Gal. ii. 4, that there is such a principle in Scripture as *bringing into the fellowship* of the "House of God," and that confidence should be maintained amongst all those in the fellowship. But we need to be careful of adopting a "mode," lest we thereby supplement the written Word. The introduction of Saul of Tarsus is the clearest case we have, and he was introduced by Barnabas through the apostles; and if those who thus bring in have a godly care put into their hearts by God (2 Cor. viii. 16), they will be able to help the rest to

have a measure of the same care. That all the flock should "know" those who are over them in the Lord is clear, and for the shepherds to be intimately acquainted with all the flock is necessary; also, that all the members should have the same care one for another is enjoined. If these Divine principles are cultivated in the heart they will find expression without fixing any mode, which might soon degenerate into a mere form.

G. A.

**Ans. B.**—Is it not well and convenient to adopt the method of Barnabas with Saul? He "took him, and brought him to the apostles," &c. (Acts ix. 27). Fully admitting that this was an introduction to *the apostles*, and not to the church, have we not here a capital example? What more seemly than for a godly brother to bring a saint to the assembly, mentioning the name and any simple facts concerning the one. In such a case it is well that the newly introduced sit by the side of the introducer, in order that all may clearly see who is being referred to. Surely all in fellowship who know what it is to be members of the one body would subsequently find opportunity to deepen their acquaintance with the newly-received saint. There is no need of cumbrous machinery in the assemblies of the saints, but there is a need (the Lord only knows how deep) of real practical interest in one another as "fellow-members" and "joint-heirs."

W. W. F.

**Ans. C.**—If those in oversight would make it a part of their business to see that all new comers were personally introduced to one and another in the assembly, as opportunity offers, much would be done in a very short time towards producing the desired effect (Acts ix. 27). However, the introducing of the new disciples is easy enough, but the difficulty nowadays is to get the older ones to take the trouble to look them up afterwards and take a brotherly interest in them. In times of real spiritual power and fervent love, these difficulties vanish. The best plan, therefore, is to endeavour to raise our spiritual tone.

R. L. S.

**Editor's Note.**—This question is not as to the way of receiving into the assembly, but as to the way in which one who *has been received* can best be *introduced*, so that all in fellowship may know them, and thus be able to identify them and recognise them and go on further to acquaint themselves with them.

It is understood that in every case of reception the assembly is made acquainted with the name of the applicant who "assays to join himself" unto the gathered company, and the grounds upon which he is received: whether as one commended by letter, or as one known by personal dealing to be truly converted, sound in the faith, and in behaviour such as accords with his profession.

Every one who understands anything of his privilege and responsibility in such a holy and important business, will diligently hearken to such testimony; and, being satisfied that the person is one whom the Lord has added, will earnestly desire to be acquainted with such added ones.

It is deplorable to witness at times the apparently callous indifference with which the large majority of believers will walk out of the meeting when such Divine business is being transacted, as though it was a matter

in which they had not the slightest concern. And still sadder is it to think that there are assemblies where persons are brought in without any reference to the assembly; so that the rank and file of the believers neither know nor can know anything to interest them in new comers, and are thus confirmed in that lack of interest and in the belief that it is none of their business who is received, and, still less, to acquaint themselves with them.

Where there is the loving desire to know the newly-received one, there will be little difficulty. It is easy to ask those who bore testimony to them, to introduce them; and surely it will be a joy to fulfil such a request.

In "society" of the world it is considered out of place to *spea*k without being *introduced*. But this worldly rule, which is right enough in its own place, ought not to stand as a bar to intercourse among those who are gathered together into closest fellowship as members of one body, children of one family, disciples of one Lord. At the same time, let not holy liberty degenerate into familiarity or rudeness. There are Christian courtesies which will regulate the approaches of the young to the old, of the brethren to the sisters, and so on. Love "*behaveth not itself unseemly*," and, whilst seeking acquaintance in a godly way, will study to do so without offence. Introduction is *desirable* where it can be had, but it is not essential.

Much can be done in the way of making acquaintance with new comers at the close of the ordinary meetings, when these are not prolonged beyond suited limits. There are also in connection with many assemblies occasional social gatherings which are specially adapted for such introductions.

If these various opportunities were heartily utilised there would be no need for the formal hand-shaking ordeal through which some are called to pass!

#### ANCIENT BABYLON.

**QUESTION 359.**—Is there any scriptural warrant for the assertion, made by many students of prophecy, that the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt?

**Ans.**—Yes; but not of the same character as that for the rebuilding of Jerusalem in Dan. ix. 25. The warrant for the assertion, that ancient Babylon will be rebuilt, is the fact that the terms of the prophecy of its overthrow and desolation have not been fulfilled. And this will apply to other places than Babylon. It applies to Egypt, Damascus, Palestine, Jerusalem, Edom, Moab, Ammon. All these will be revived in order to their final overthrow and desolation.

The prophecy of Babylon's doom is recorded in Isaiah xiii. 1 to xiv. 27, read as a continuous prophecy, and in Jeremiah l. and li. These require to be *carefully* and *closely* read. The precise terms of the prophecy are to be noted in reference to Babylon's overthrow in the past, its subsequent condition, and its condition to-day. Isaiah's prophecy was made 106 years before Babylon was a city; yet, in one short verse, he predicts its existence, its glory, and its doom! "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." "The burden of Babylon, which

Isaiah the son of Amoz did see," was connected with "*the day of the Lord*." Verse 6: Was that fulfilled when Babylon was conquered? Were verses 9 to 13 fulfilled then? Was verse 20 fulfilled? No; a city, "Hillah," and several villages, with several thousands of inhabitants, are on the site of ancient Babylon. xiv. 7: Was this the result of the fall of Babylon? xiv. 12-14: Was all this fulfilled? No; these are as future as 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9. Jer. li. 8—"Babylon is *suddenly* fallen and destroyed." Babylon was not "*suddenly*" destroyed. Her decline and fall were not sudden, but gradual. Its capture by the Persians is recorded thus: "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" (Dan. v.). It was the quiet transfer of power from one dynasty to another: and under this first Median prince Babylon rested just as securely as it did under the Chaldeans before. Alexander the Great, after conquering Persia, selected it as the intended capital of his vast dominions, and died there in the midst of a greatness that was making Babylon for a season a kind of Metropolitan centre to the earth. This was very unlike *sudden* desolation. . . . Its judgments have never come yet 'in one hour.' Slow and almost indiscernible decay has been the characteristic of its decline. Again, Jer. l. 1-5 indicate very distinctly *when* the final destruction of Babylon takes place. Verse 3 says: 'For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.' These words can scarcely need comment. Great as the desolation is that has already visited Babylon, yet neither the land nor the city has been so desolate as for *no one* to dwell therein, and for *man and beast* to be removed. Moreover, if a desolation adequately great had rested upon Babylon, yet it cannot be that here spoken of. It must recur again: for the time is here marked as being when Israel and Judah TOGETHER (and since Rehoboam's time they have never been united) shall not only seek the Lord, but 'join themselves to Him in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.'

"In Jer. li. 26 it is stated, 'And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations,' but the ruin of the buildings at Babylon has been mainly accelerated by the removal of the materials with which she was built for the construction of other towns in the neighbourhood.

"Scripture marks the period of Babylon's fall as contemporaneous with three great concurrent events—the destruction of Antichrist, the forgiveness of Israel, and the coming of the day of the Lord; events which are still future. The Scripture also declares that its fall shall be most *sudden*," &c., &c.

But I must pause here. Enough has been stated to whet the appetite of inquiry, and to show the inquirer that there is sufficient reason for some students of prophecy asserting that Babylon will be rebuilt.

L. D. G.



## “DISTRICT OVERSIGHT MEETINGS:”\*

### Their Origin and their Issues.

BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

NOTHING is more natural and comely than a desire on the part of brethren who have shepherd hearts to come together for mutual edification and for fellowship in prayer. The responsibility so generally inculcated in Scripture to exhort, to encourage, to edify, to help one another, is ample warrant for such comings together as opportunity may occur.

But, as with many other good things, there is a danger connected with such a movement against which it is well to be forewarned.

The danger is the assumption by such gatherings of a *judicial character* and their coming to be regarded as a *court of appeal* on all matters of difficulty, whose decision is absolute and must be submitted to upon penalty of being declared “out of fellowship”—whether the insubjection be of one individual or an assembly.

There is much in the New Testament that plainly indicates the existence of

#### A FELLOWSHIP AMONG OVERSEERS

in the assemblies, and hence among the assemblies themselves, which resulted in unity of interests and of action.

Instruction from the Lord, sent to one assembly, was not to be confined to it but to be handed on to others (Col. iv. 16).

Contributions for the poor in distant parts were not sent from each assembly independently, but were made up together as from the “churches of Macedonia,” those of Achaia, &c. (2 Cor. viii. 9).

The elders or overseers of a city, unquestionably representing different local assemblies, were sent for, and came, to meet with the apostle (Acts xx. 17).

In Jerusalem the apostles and elders came together to consider great doctrinal questions affecting the whole Church in all places and in all time (Acts xv.).

This was a legislative council, having apostolic authority and power, and hence, “as they went through the cities, they delivered

them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” (Acts xvi. 4). It was not a court for the settlement of local difficulties, and assumed no such function. It dealt, as we have said, with a great doctrinal question, affecting consciences everywhere; its decrees were promulgated with apostolic authority, and are recorded upon the page of Scripture.

For any local or district meeting of overseers to take such a position *now* would be manifestly a mere assumption and without warrant.

These allusions, and many others that might be adduced, show that no barriers divided assembly from assembly or oversight from oversight, but that when occasion required they could come together happily as one unbroken fellowship.

For such a state of things it behoves us to labour and to pray, but again we would look more particularly at

#### THE DANGER

which lies in such close proximity to the truth, the snare of Satan into which, by unperceived degrees, the zealous but unwary servants of the Lord may be so easily beguiled.

We shall presume, for the sake of illustration, that, in a certain district, elder brethren, more or less addicted to shepherding the flock of God, have been led to meet together at regular intervals for prayer, for godly intercourse, for the promotion of personal acquaintance, for the study of the Word of God, especially as it bears on the order of the House of God, its ministries, discipline, fellowship, &c., &c. The realised effect has been a drawing together in mutual love, confidence, respect. Increase in knowledge of the will of God as to these intensely practical subjects, resulting in a nearer approach to identity of action among the different assemblies, and also in a great increase of concern to avoid everything that might alienate or separate and prove to be a root of bitterness and a cause of trouble. So far all is well! The fellowship has been maintained and deepened, and yet the responsibility to the Lord of each local assembly has been left untampered with.

But as the points on the line of railway, at

\* Issued in Pamphlet form. 1d. each; six or more, post free.

which a train is diverted from the main line into a siding, are very narrow, and the movement that effects the departure very small, so is it in spiritual things.

#### A DIFFICULTY

has arisen in some assembly in the said city or district, and the demand is made to have the difficulty brought up at the "district oversight meeting," to be there judged, decided, and disposed of.

What better plan could be suggested? Is it not in such a meeting that wisdom to deal with difficulties will be found? Will the unity of action thus secured not be equivalent to apostolic power? Who will dare to dispute the sentence of such a court? If any dare to dispute its authority, to question its jurisdiction, or to dissent from its judgment, is it not easy to declare them outlaws and so to sever them from all fellowship? Thus unity, absolute and complete, will be secured, "the church" set up again on earth, and the long record of schism at last brought to a close!

Perhaps few, if any, would boldly subscribe to such a creed, and yet is this not the necessary issue of the principle inaugurated the first time a district oversight meeting assumes *judicial* functions and *judges* a case of difficulty?

For such a self-constituted court we find no warrant in New Testament Scriptures. We regard it as the reproduction of sectarianism on lines long ago renounced as being unscriptural.

But it may be asked, if there be no such court of appeal,

HOW ARE DIFFICULTIES TO BE SETTLED, and how are the conflicting claims of rival assemblies to be disposed of? Is no help to be given to those who are in perplexity, trouble, and confusion? These are serious questions and cannot be lightly set aside.

As far as we have gathered from Scripture the channel of help is not in "church courts" but in the ministry of faithful men.

Much of the ministry of Paul, both spoken and written, was evoked by and directed toward the helping of those in circumstances of difficulty, in many respects analogous to those of the present time.

Notably at Antioch the individual faithful ministry of Paul was the means of restoring the unity that had been well-nigh wrecked (Gal ii.). In John's third epistle he refers to sorrowful disunion and disaster. Those whom the apostle loves and sympathises with are cast out of the church. The will of man is ascendant, and the ready resource of the carnal mind, excommunication and division, is resorted to, and, so far as appears in the narrative, "power," such as it was, was on the side of unrighteousness.

The apostle neither counsels those outside to form a rival assembly, nor does he direct them to appeal to any "court of overseers" representing the assemblies in "the district," nor to sever themselves finally from those who remained with Diotrophes. He only says, "When I come I will remember his deeds." Individual ministry in the power of God is the only resource indicated.

Timothy is exhorted in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves (2 Tim. ii. 25); and it appears that very much of his ministry must have been directed toward meeting errors and heresies that were coming in like a flood: and in view of continuous and wider necessities Timothy is instructed to commit the apostolic teachings to "faithful men," who should be "able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2).

In all this we find it to be

#### THE UNIFORM WAY OF THE LORD

to use individual ministry for meeting the constantly arising difficulties.

The same principle is found in 1 Cor. vi. 5 "Is there not a wise man among you?" It is not, "Is there not a united oversight to settle the matter?" but "a wise man."

And the wisdom of God in such an appointment is most manifest. The opinion or judgment of a man is open to question, to discussion, and to proof. If it be of God it will approve itself to the spiritual. God can be sought and counted upon to direct His truth to hearts and consciences, and patience can be exercised as faith is waiting upon God to bring to oneness of mind and heart.

But the judgment of

#### "A SUPREME COURT,"

such as "the united oversight of a district," having summary powers to "cut off" in subject

assemblies, admits of no discussion, no question, no appeal; it is absolute, and must be practically, if not in theory, acknowledged to be infallible. Hence individual exercise of heart and conscience before God is stifled, and bondage, hard as iron and cold as ice, defines the limits of the fellowship.\*

Assume to be the church of God and treat all as schismatics who do not see their way to endorse the assumption—such is the principle: and the issue, a self-complacent, intolerant, dictatorial sect, flourishing for a time because there is so much in the theory that appeals to the pride of the human heart.

Nevertheless a unity thus constituted necessarily contains in itself the elements of disintegration, which must surely, sooner or later, assert themselves.

May God grant unto His servants a sight of the excellency there is in the combination of grace and truth, and of faithfulness and patience, and bring home to many hearts the conviction that even truth may be so forced upon others in fleshly zeal as to issue in damage to souls and dishonour to God.

## PRAYER:

### According to the Scriptures.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. G. M'VICKER.

THE aim of Christianity is to bring men back to God. It teaches them to know God. When they know Him they cannot but call on Him to help them in their needs. This is prayer, the subject before us. Let me turn your thoughts to some things said about it in the Scriptures.

1. Prayer is to be addressed to God as our Father. If we do not know God as our Father, we cannot pray truly.

The woman of Samaria, in John iv., was occupied about the place of worship. The Lord Jesus, in answering her, turned her thoughts from the place to the object of worship. "The true worshippers shall worship

*the Father.*" In coming to God in prayer we must know that we are coming to a Father. There is all the difference in the world, as you know, between asking a thing of a stranger and asking it of a father. If you were asking a favour of some high Government official, not knowing that in your absence from home your father had been appointed to that post, and in the middle of your application you suddenly discovered that it was with your own father you were pleading, what a revolution in the state of your mind the discovery would produce! How instantly fear and anxiety would give place to confidence and hope! Let us remember every time we pray we are addressing our Father.

2. Then another point of great importance is that we come to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus. I fear many Christians fail to grasp the vast importance of this point. Turn to two scriptures bearing on it. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John xiv. 13). And chapter xvi. 23, 24, "In that day ye shall ask Me nothing. . . . Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full?"

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in My name.*" But "*in that day*" ye shall. Till the Holy Ghost came to dwell in them and give them the consciousness of being one with Christ, they could not ask in His name. In what is called the Lord's prayer we hear nothing of asking in the name of Jesus. That was not possible then. But when the day came in which they knew that "Christ was in the Father, and they in Christ, and Christ in them," then they could ask in His name.

Think of what this involves. We do not come in our own names to God, nor in the name of our faith or of our earnestness, but in the name of the Lord Jesus. Think, if you were authorised to go to a king in the name of his son, what sort of reception you would count on. And on coming to God in the name of His Son, our prayers having all the weight which that name gives to them, with what confidence we should present them!

3. Another point of great moment in prayer

\* We have need to watch against every attempt to interpose any authority between the individual conscience and God, whether it be the authority of a "general" over a "salvation army," a "director" of a missionary society, a trades union intervening between masters and servants and the responsibility of each to God, or a "district oversight" that "decides" in matters of difficulty and claims absolute subjection to its authority.

is that we are "to pray in the Holy Ghost" (see Eph. vi. 18, Jude 20). We are not to ask things in our own wills, but to be guided by the Holy Ghost to ask according to the will of God (see Rom. viii. 26, 27). Let us take care, then, not to ask for things thoughtlessly. Some time ago I heard prayer asked in a prayer meeting on behalf of a lady, who was to have one of her eyes removed the next day, that the surgeon might be guided and that she might be sustained. One present rose and said, "God is almighty: He can heal the eyes and there need be no operation. Let us ask Him to do it." And he did ask, or appear to ask. But it was not in God's will; it was not prayer in the Holy Ghost; for the operation *did* take place, and the eye was successfully removed. The Holy Ghost would lead us to reflect as we are asking anything from God: "Is this according to God's mind? Is this a request to which I can put the name of the Lord Jesus?" A child in a boat, pulling on the rope that fastens it to the shore, may fancy that he is pulling the shore out to the boat; he is really pulling himself and the boat in to the shore. In waiting on God in prayer we are not turning His mind round to ours; the Holy Ghost is turning our minds round to His. How true what I once heard a servant of Christ saying: "When God is going to do a thing, He first puts it into some good man's heart to ask Him to do it." That is what prayer is. "It is the shadow of the coming event. Stop a man's shadow and you stop the man too. So with prayer. The event does not come without it."

Oh, that we understood what prayer in the Holy Ghost to the Father in the name of the Son is!

4. A fourth important point in prayer is suggested by Ps. cix. 4, "I *give myself* unto prayer," and Acts vi. 4, "We will *give ourselves* continually to prayer." Some people in business put only the half of themselves into what they are doing; the other half is somewhere else. Do such men ever succeed in business? I am afraid a good many of us when we are praying fail to put the whole of ourselves into it. Is it any wonder that asking after this fashion, we "receive not"? If you examine that verse in Ps. cix., you will notice how striking it is.

Leave out the words inserted by the translators and it reads: "but I, a prayer." He was, as it were, turned into a prayer; he stood an incarnate petition before God; his whole being was put into it. This is the sort of prayer that God wants; prayer that will not be denied, that God cannot refuse.

5. Turn to Heb. iv. 16 for another point regarding prayer well worthy of notice. "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." You observe it is not that we are to *ask* for mercy, but to *obtain* it; not to seek grace, but to *find* it. We are to have it there and then. This is illustrated by a remarkable saying of our Lord's, in Mark xi. 24, and my object in referring to it will be made clear by giving you three different renderings of His words. The Latin Vulgate gives: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye *shall* receive them, and ye shall have them." The Authorised Version has: "Believe that ye *receive* them, and ye shall have them." The Revised Version, adopting a slightly different reading, gives: "Believe that ye *have* received them, and ye shall have them." So sure is our trust in God as a hearer of prayer to be, that as we rise from our knees we should be able to say: "The things that I have asked for I have already received."

6. Turn to two very striking scriptures giving conditions necessary for us to observe in order to have prayer answered. The first is Ps. xxxvii. 4, "Delight thyself in the Lord; and He will give thee the desires of thy heart." Here we learn that if we want to have the desires of our hearts granted we must delight ourselves in God. What is it to delight ourselves in God? If you delight in any person he will be often in your thoughts; you will eagerly seek opportunities of enjoying his society. Do you ever sit down for half-an-hour of an evening to meditate, with your heart wakened up to its depths, on the glories of the character of God; on what a delightful Being God is; on His perfections in relation to yourself; that He is Almighty that He may help *you*, merciful that He may pardon you, rich that He may enrich you; on the perfect love that led Him to give His own Son to die for you? I can promise you that the half-hour

thus spent will be the happiest in the day. What precious thoughts about God will the Holy Ghost give as you open your heart to let His glory shine into it from the face of Jesus Christ! This is delighting in God. And if we delight ourselves in God—it is a bold word, but it is His word and He will make it true—He will give us the desires of our heart.

7. The other passage is John xv. 7: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Are we denying self and living Christ (for that is abiding in Him), and are we holding His words in our hearts lovingly and reverently? God can trust us, then, to ask what we will, and engages to give it to us. But we cannot evade His conditions. We may as well think to make the sun rise in the west, or the rivers go up the hill-sides, as reach the blessing God promises by any other way than that which He prescribes. And remember, having the Holy Ghost we can fulfil His conditions. We can abide in Christ and have His words abiding in us, and then claim the blessing promised.

8. There is yet another passage that many have found an unspeakable help in laying hold on God in prayer. Rom. viii. 32: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" I know no verse that will more embolden us to ask with confidence great things from God. However great the things are that we ask, what are they compared to His Son? And can the love that gave Him refuse us them?

A word or two as to what the Holy Ghost will guide us to ask for. I am afraid many of our prayers are very selfish. "Lord help me; bless me; make me holy; make me useful." It is me—me—me—that we make the great burden of our petitions. Now in the order of the Lord's prayer we are taught that in prayer, as in everything else, God should be first. "Hallowed be Thy name." When the heart is in a right state—that is, when it is delighting in God, when it is abiding in Christ and holding fast His words, when it is ruled by the Holy Ghost—its first and strongest desire will be that God's Name should be hallowed, that His kingdom should come, that His will should be done on earth as it is done

in heaven. Our first prayers should be for the Lord "Prayer also shall be made for Him continually" (Ps. lxxii. 15).

Then remember Paul's words in Eph. vi. 18: "Praying . . . for all saints, and for me." A good test of the state of our heart is the measure in which we can give ourselves to pray for fellow-saints; considering what is such-and-such a one's burden, what is his need, and taking it on ourselves, and pleading for it as if it were our own. "You that are strong ought to bear (to carry the burden of) the infirmities of the weak." It is a sign of a prosperous and healthy soul when it can rise above its own need, and, in sympathy with the heart of Christ, enlarge itself to take in the wants of the whole Church, while, like Elijah contracting himself to the child, it can take in the personal needs of known saints and servants of Christ. Hours spent in such prayer, how well they will be rewarded in the blessings brought down on others and in the enrichment of the soul that spends them! How a little band of saints praying thus could shake the city or the province in which they live! It was prayer that brought Pentecost. The Irish Revival of 1859 was the fruit of such prayer. Every true work of God can be traced up to the same source.

"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

[This article can be had in book form at 1d. each.]

## PRAYER.

PRAYER is not prayer, if in *faith* be wanting:

Asking, and then in haste to turn away.

Prayer, true prayer, is alien to vaunting.

The boasted plea: We only have to pray,

Asking for what we want, and only say,

"Lord give it me"; perchance our lusts to fill,  
Or pride and vanity the more display;

No wonder if our answers are but *NIL*.

Prayer must be in *faith* and consonant with His will.

PAIGNTON.

S. B.

"How often has that word in Ps. xxv. been a comfort to me, when I have prayed—'Lord, shew me Thy way.' . . . 'What man is he that feareth the Lord, even him will He shew the way that he should take.' And, again, Ps. xxxvii. 23, 'The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and He delighteth in his way.'"—J. B. M.

## ELIJAH AND OBADIAH.

1 Kings xviii. 1-16.)

THE fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The unregenerate are not in this secret: they have "no fear of God before their eyes." In the Lord Jesus we see this grace, like every other, in perfection. In His saints, this blessed workmanship of the Spirit is more or less manifested, according to the measure of the gift of grace, and the sphere of walk and service to which they are called. Elijah had long walked in the fear of the Lord; he, therefore, feared not the wicked and mighty Ahab. This dignified man of the earth was but weak and impotent in the account of the man of faith, who waited upon the Lord God of Israel with a circumcised ear. The believing eye beholds the Majesty of heaven as having *all* dominion and might, and perceives Him overruling all the ways of men, to carry out His own eternal purposes and counsels; thus making even the wrath of man to praise Him. The spirit of the prophet had rested in the fear of the Lord for "many days," in the retirement of the widow's house at Zarephath. Now, however, the voice of Him whom he fears commands his steps and services in another direction, and, like one of old, he is able to say, "Behold, here am I." "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." This must have been an affecting announcement to the quiet and happy little circle at Zarephath; but the prophet seems not surprised; he is ready for the bold service. He was, we know, a man of prayer; and the blessedness of secret dealing with God is again made manifest. Happy indeed, are those who, while occupying the retirement and quiet of the family circle, can yet be found with girded loins and the staff in hand when the Master calls, ready to bear an open testimony for the Lord before the face of His enemies. Such, I presume, was the state of soul of this dear servant of the Lord, for we are told that, "Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab." What can be more instructive to us, beloved, or more beautifully in season than this fruit of the Spirit of God? How needful that we

should so diligently use our leisure moments in fellowship with the Lord, that we may be prepared unto every good word and work, or that, when He cometh and knocketh, we may open to Him immediately!

But there was another in the land besides Elijah who "feared the Lord greatly," and who also, in another sphere and manner, glorified the God of Israel. Though members of the same elect family, they were not gifted alike—not called to shew forth the characteristics of the Lord in the same line of things; nevertheless, both were vessels of mercy, both wrought on by the same Spirit, both servants of the Lord, both fearing the God of Israel, but each was called to a distinct character of service, even as it is now. Obadiah does not seek to imitate Elijah, nor Elijah to perform the same kind of service as Obadiah. They both fear the Lord, and seek, more or less, to do His holy will, though their faith and love flow out in different channels. Elijah, evidently, was specially called to bear a public testimony to the nation of Israel, while Obadiah's place was to glorify God in the king's palace—he "was governor of the king's house."

As a servant to his earthly master, Obadiah was, doubtless, faithful and true. It was a place of trust, as well as of honour and distinction; and his feeding the prophets of the Lord, whom his mistress had condemned to death, plainly shows the reality of his fear of God, his love to the brethren, and the readiness with which he could risk his own life, rather than unite with the enemies of the Lord in the persecution of His servants. With all this godly fear, however, there was no fellowship of spirit between Elijah and Obadiah when they came together, though they knew each other. Obadiah lacked an important feature in the character of his Divine Master. "The world cannot hate you," said Jesus; "but Me it hateth, because *I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil*" (John vii. 7). Our blessed Lord not only walked in holy separation from the evil that surrounded Him, but He also reproveth its ungodly character. He was in every sense the Faithful Witness. We do not, I observe, find this faithful testimony in Obadiah; hence, he was ill prepared for fellowship in the Spirit with

Elijah. The king's house, in which he abode, was not only the house which was best supplied with provisions in the time of sore famine; but, as it has been in all ages, was also a place of earthly honour, distinction, and authority. This history, however, is very important, as showing us that one may fear the Lord greatly, and yet come short of the Lord's mind; in one's ways be glorifying God in some things, and fall far behind in others; and that some of the household of faith, through reserves and unfaithfulness, may be incapable of walking in fellowship with the more single-eyed followers of the Lord Jesus.

Elijah, doubtless, felt, when he met Obadiah, that his position savoured too much of the world, to enable him to reckon upon much fellowship with him. The honoured prophet had for years been trusting in the living God for daily bread, and had found that neither the cruse of oil had failed, nor the barrel of meal wasted. Obadiah, however, was running over the land, at Ahab's command, to find grass to save the cattle alive; and Elijah recognises him as the king's servant, and says, "Go, tell *thy lord*, Behold, Elijah is here." This was, indeed, a most extraordinary request, for which Obadiah was not at all prepared. Though a man of God, he had not been, practically, a man of faith; and, therefore, instead of considering the matter in the light of God's countenance, he receives the summons with an uncircumcised ear, judges after a carnal manner, and reckons, from what he knows of the character and ways of the king, on nothing less than the loss of his life. "What have I sinned," said he, "that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I

hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me" (v. 9-14).

How unlike the language of faith is this verbose reply to the prophet's request! Fear of man, distrust of God, and self-complacency, are its principal elements; and I would ask, what other character of things emanate from souls that are not walking in the light, as He is in the light? Hath not the Scripture concluded that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin"? Doth not this little narrative forcibly remind us of that proverb, "*Better is a little with the fear of the Lord*, than great treasure and trouble therewith"? The atmosphere of Ahab's palace, untestified against, was too defiling for such fine fruit of the Spirit to luxuriate in, as was found so seasonable and matured in the retired cottage at Zarephath. We do well to remember that our calling is into the fellowship of Christ, who hath delivered us from the present evil world, and who said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." But this lesson is only to be learned effectually by the heart and conscience becoming acquainted with the mind of God in Christ crucified. The cross of our Lord Jesus indelibly records the alienated and corrupt condition of the world. Its wisdom, religion, and power, all combined to crucify "the Lord of glory." "He came into the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." But while the cross of Christ thus so legibly depicts the whole world as lying in the wicked one, it also proclaims the full forgiveness of our sins, our deliverance from guilt and death, and our complete and everlasting salvation. The instruction we unquestionably gather from thus meditating on Christ crucified, is not only that we should "come out from among the ungodly, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing," but also, that we should "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but *rather reprove them.*" The word of "testimony" is associated in the sacred Scriptures with *overcoming* by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. xii. 11). May we have no reserves, beloved, but increasingly desire to "stand

perfect and complete in ALL the will of God!"

The Spirit of God reads to us deeply solemn and searching lessons in this short but comprehensive narrative. It will be profitable, and redound to the glory of God, if it serve to warn any of us against the pernicious error of fearing men, instead of serving our "masters according to the flesh, in singleness of heart, *fearing God.*" Had a plain faithful testimony been given to the wicked king, by his believing servant, he would not have given such an unspiritual reply to the Lord's prophet: but, "the fear of man bringeth a snare." Elijah, however, patiently hears the loquacious answer of Obadiah; but his eye, at this moment, was too single to notice it; and, therefore, as one who consciously abides in the presence of God, and is firmly set upon doing His will, Elijah says, "As the Lord of Hosts liveth, *before whom I stand,* I will surely show myself unto him to-day" (v. 15).

This was a solemn era in Obadiah's life, for he felt at this moment, I believe, in common with many others under soul-convictions, that his career had arrived at such a crisis as compelled him to take a step, either *forward* in the fear of the Lord, with the prospect of suffering, or *backward*, through the fear of man, into the snare of the enemy, with the human prospect of ease and quietness. The wise and unyielding decision of the man of faith was so forcible, exemplary, and unanswerable, that Obadiah, without another word, "went to meet Ahab, and told him." Thus, the snare was broken, the trembling, halting, God-fearing man delivered, the service of the Lord performed; and the imaginary evil now vanished before the step of faith—"Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah." C.

#### VISITING AND PREACHING.

"We have found a blessing in visiting the sick, which, perhaps, has been quite as fruitful as the preaching, from which we have seen comparatively little fruit. The harvest is in the hand of the Great Husbandman. Perhaps He is fitting us to bear a reaping time. It requires a steady hand to carry a full cup, and perhaps our Father sees we could not bear much blessing; to wait the due season is a trial of faith."—J. B. M.

#### "HELPING TOGETHER BY PRAYER."

NOTES OF ADDRESSES ON THE  
SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS BY J. R. C.

"Ye also helping together by prayer for us"  
(2 Cor. i. 11).

IT is the duty and privilege of the Lord's people to pray especially for those of His servants who are more prominently in the Master's work. I believe we are forgetful of this. Those who are leaders, are, as it were, marks for Satan. Just as in the world's battles the commanding officers are specially aimed at, and as in the days of Jehoshaphat the order was given, "Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the King of Israel," so is it in the great conflict between light and darkness. Satan will ever seek to compass the downfall of the leaders, whether it be leaders in Gospel testimony or leaders in the Church of God.

How important, then, that prayer should be made for such.

The apostle Paul constantly sought the prayers of the saints, and was encouraged when he knew that he was remembered.

In Eph. vi. 19, he says: "Praying always . . . for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel."

Thus he seeks their help, conscious that he in himself is as weak as any other man, and that he needs Divine power for boldness, else he would shrink from the reproach and suffering of the cross.

He also seeks their prayers that utterance may be given to him. This did not mean mere fluency of speech, but that God might enable him to utter plainly all His message, whatever the difficulties or the opposition he might meet with.

This Divine utterance is not to be got at college, or by preparation of discourses, or by committing them to memory, or by elocution classes. God only can give the power so to utter His truth that it will reach the heart and conscience as well as the understanding of the hearers, whether they be saints or sinners. Therefore let special prayer be made for those who minister the Word.

I don't believe any of us is aware how mightily Satan strives to hinder the utterance of truth suited to the need of the people of



God. His opposition to the Gospel is more readily seen and felt.

Perhaps a servant of the Lord, through weakness, or hesitancy, or lack of faith, may be slow to come forth with the Lord's message. Immediately Satan stirs up some talkative brother to rise in the flesh and occupy precious time with that which is not to profit. Thus edification is hindered, and Satan gets the advantage.

But even if we had all the gifted teachers we know at one of our meetings or conferences, and hours upon hours of spoken truth, still we might fail to get what our souls need. But if God is truly waited upon, and the prayer of faith and expectancy goes up to Him, to give His message, to give that which He knows to be needed, surely He will do so.

Do we not often go to meetings for ministry of the Word as though we had nothing to do but listen to what is said? Just as worldly people go to a concert—the programme is all arranged; they have only to listen! No, we shall not get our need supplied in that way. There must be in this, as in all else, the owning of our dependence upon God, and the utter powerlessness of the creature. It is the hungry soul that He filleth with good things. The rich He sends empty away. The servant of the Lord knows what a difference there is between speaking to a hungry people and a people that are full and self-satisfied.

Another instance of the apostle's desire for the prayers of the saints is in Rom. xv. 29-33: "Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me," &c. Read this passage carefully and see what a number of beautiful requests he puts into their lips.

Read also 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."

This example of the apostle's is worth the imitation of all servants of God, and worthy of the hearty response of all believers.

Most helpful and blessed to both would be such fellowship in prayer. How interest in the work would thus be deepened, and genuine concern for the welfare and fruitfulness of the Lord's servants be increased.

**"That for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf."**

Suppose one is sick, and the fellowship of the saints in prayer is asked on his behalf, and God is pleased to answer their prayer; then many thanksgivings go up to God. God gets more glory, more praise, more thanks, more joy, than if only one or two had prayed; for each one of the many who truly prayed will surely offer thanks for the answer. That, I think, is the thought in this verse. The greater the number who pray for his deliverance, the more will thanksgivings abound to God. How little we think of God's joy in the thanksgivings of His children! But this was always before the mind of Paul.

When the Lord Jesus cleansed the ten lepers, only one returned to give thanks. What joy that *one* thanksgiving yielded to Him! How much more had the ten returned together to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving!

When Peter was in prison "prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God for him" (Acts xii. 5). God delivered him through their prayers, and we cannot doubt that their united thanksgiving followed the marvellous answer.

Individual prayer is indeed needful and blessed, and none knew this better than Paul; yet he never failed to seek the knitting together of hearts in requests to which all could say "Amen."

The same principle is in 2 Cor. ix. 12: "For the administration of this service (contributing toward the help of poor saints) not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God."

In the apostle's judgment, no small part of the blessing of this service would be the thanks that would ascend to God from hearts and homes gladdened and relieved by the contributions of love. Whatever tends to produce a wider circle of thanksgiving to God, brings increased glory and joy to Him. I fear we do not appreciate as we ought the Divine way in these matters.

"DEAR Rutherford said: 'Crosses were wings to heaven.' Thus, while we sink we soar, and nearest to the throne will be the footstool of humility. I suppose, as a rule, to serve the Lord 'with much humility of mind' it must be 'with many tears.'"—J. B. M.

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

IN these days when "men are heaping to themselves teachers having itching ears," and "turning away their ears from the truth, and are being turned unto fables," it behoves us who have been "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ," and more especially those of us who have been gathered unto the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to "make it our aim to be well pleasing to Him." Men's commandments, men's doctrines, and men's ordinances shall pass away. But "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." How important, then, that we should "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Had we nothing more than His command to "search the Scriptures," even that were enough for the obedient heart, to make us "take heed to the more sure word of prophecy." But God in his great love and mercy has revealed to us, at least, three things which His Word is able to do, to encourage us in seeking to learn His will.

In 2 Tim. iii. 15, God tells us by His servant Paul that "the Holy Scriptures *are able* to make us wise unto salvation." Yes! beloved fellow-saints, it was through His Word that we discovered first of all our need of salvation; and it was that same Word that brought the blessed assurance of salvation to our trembling, guilty souls. And what joy and peace filled our souls when first, by the Holy Spirit, that Word was carried home in power to our well-nigh despairing hearts, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life"; and that word dwelling in us still, we bless God that our ears have heard the Word of Life. To be made wise unto salvation from "eternal death," a "lake of fire" is infinitely more than our feeble minds can grasp; and yet, it is not all. God's Word reveals much more. In Gal. i. 4, we read, "He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father." Have we allowed His Word to make us wise in this matter? Do we know what it is to be delivered from its pleasures, its aims, and, above all, its religion? Or are we joining in its pleasures? and are our aims such that the

world can see little difference? and, rather than suffer the "reproach of Christ," are we seeking to be friendly with all?—*large-hearted* as men call it. But large-heartedness, according to the Word, is "running in the way of God's commandments" (Ps. cxix. 32), and separation unto the Lord (2 Cor. vi. 13, to end). Are we joining the popular movements of the present day; indulging in the popular, but unscriptural, ways of doing work for the Lord, rather than be thought *peculiar*. Albeit, "He gave Himself for us, that He might purify unto Himself a *peculiar people*"; and our peculiarity should be seen in our "showing forth His virtues" (1 Peter ii. 9), and in our being "zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14); and in order that we should make no mistake as to what are *good works*, we are informed that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all *good works*"; not some, but "all"; so that we can only call those works good for which we can produce Scripture.

Now look at another thing the Word is able to do: "Receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which *is able* to save your souls" (Jas. i. 21). But you may say, "I am saved already." True, you are saved from hell; but it is the will of God that we should be saved from backsliding, and all the misery of soul that follows in its train. In writing to Timothy, Paul exhorts him to take heed to himself, and to continue in the doctrine; for in so doing he would save himself and those that heard him. Now Timothy was a believer; he was saved so far as eternal life was concerned. But he needed, like you and me, to be saved from falling, saved from backsliding; and that was to be accomplished by receiving with meekness the ingrafted word or continuing in the doctrine. Peter says, "He that will love *life*, and see good days, let him eschew evil and do good." As another has put it, "It is one thing to have an existence, but quite another thing to live." And if we desire to *live* and see good days, then we must receive with meekness the ingrafted word. From the verses that follow, it is quite evident that two things are involved in receiving the word *with meekness*, which are "hearing" and "doing." Because if we are hearers only, and not doers, then we are

deceiving our own selves. But if we are *doers* of the Word as well as *hearers*, then, but not till then, are we receiving with meekness the ingrafted word; and thereby our souls shall be saved from "eating the fruit of our own way" now, and from "suffering loss" on "that day when the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Of our Lord Jesus Christ we are told that "the Lord God wakened His ear to hear as the learner" (Is. l. 4); and the following verses tell of His obedience to what He heard. Beloved, "He hath left us an example that we should follow His steps." May we, as the days grow darker, increasingly seek to have the "opened ear" to hear His voice; and may we, like Him, not be rebellious, but obedient, ever praying, "Teach me to *do* Thy will."

Again, we who are dull learners are encouraged to search the Scriptures, by the apostle Paul telling us that "the word of His grace *is able* to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts xx. 32). *Able to build you up*. And how much need, when saints are being "carried about with every wind of doctrine," that we who profess to be gathered to His Name alone should see to it that we are being built up by His Word; everything else will fail. We may listen to God-sent and gifted teachers (a great privilege), and through them we may learn much of Scripture truths in our heads; but if we don't know what it is, in our closets alone with God, to learn those truths from His own Word, like the noble Bereans who received the Word, and "searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so," I fear we know very little of what it is to be *built up*.

Paul's desire for the saints at Colosse was that they "would walk in Him, rooted and *built up* in Him, and stablished in the faith as they had been taught." And in the same measure that we allow Him to teach us by His Word shall we know what it is to be *built up* and rooted in Him. Why are so many of the Lord's people so unstable? Simply because they have not allowed God to teach them by His Word, which, like Himself, knows no change, and "endureth for ever." They may have read men's books or listened to their words, which always leave us in uncertainty;

but when we have a "Thus saith the Lord," we have something that *builds up* something unerring and immovable.

Jude, after calling to remembrance the words of the apostles concerning the last days, how that men should walk after their own ungodly lusts, says, "But ye beloved, *building up* yourselves on your most holy faith"; and then tells us of "Him that is *able* to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Till then, beloved fellow-pilgrim, as you journey through the wilderness, may you, by His grace, take the Word of God as your only guide, "a lamp to your feet and a light to your path."

---

### THE PRAYERS IN EPH. I. AND III. CONTRASTED.

**I**N chapter i. the apostle had been speaking of that unto which the Church was predestinated—of the dispensation of the fulness of times—of the inheritance, and the redemption of the purchased possession.

Therefore, in the prayer which follows, he addresses God as the Father of *GLORY*; his petition is for the spirit of *wisdom* and *revelation*, that their understandings might be enlightened, that they might know the glory of this inheritance, and the greatness of that power which wrought in them—even that power which raised up Christ from the dead, and put Him far above every name which is named, either in this world or in that which is to come.

But in chapter iii. the apostle had been speaking of *tribulation*, desiring that they should not *faint*. He was himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ for them (verse 1); but it was their glory (verse 13): yet was it glory in the form of *SUFFERING*; not that which had occupied chapter i. Therefore, his prayer now is to the *FATHER* of our Lord Jesus Christ, not for "the spirit of wisdom," but "to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." The wilderness way was in his thought, not so much the future glory; and he does not take them far above principality and power, where Christ is set, but prays that down here "Christ may dwell in their hearts *by faith*," that they may know, not the ex-

ceeding greatness of His *power*, but the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of His *LOVE*, which yet "passeth knowledge." Their *PRESENT NEED* was upon the apostle's heart, and the assurance is, "God is *able* to do above all we ask or think": but their condition was one of necessity, and although God be able to do for them exceeding abundantly, the word which belongs to the wilderness condition is, "ask," "think."

Another point of contrast may be marked in the words (chapter i.), "His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," and in chapter iii., "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." In chapter i. we are beholding *Christ*, the knowledge of Him, His calling, His inheritance, the power that wrought in Him, and made Him head over all; the Church coming in as His fulness. But in chapter iii. the apostle seeks to pour all of grace, glory, or love, into that empty vessel the Church, to fill up their hearts to the brim, even that *they* "might be filled with all the fulness of God." C.

### WORDS BY THE WAY.

THE remnant of Israel, under their governor Nehemiah, were engaged in a great work, and because the work was of God those who tried to hinder were many. The principal opposition came from three classes (Neh. iv. 10-12). *First*, their avowed adversaries (verse 11); *second*, their kindred (verse 12); and *third*, those of their own house (verse 10). Christians are now under the leadership of Christ, engaged in work for God; and the same tactics to hinder are constantly pursued. *First*, We have to meet an open opposition from the avowed adversaries. This, however, is the least dangerous, as unconcealed enmity usually defeats its own purpose. Hence, this plan is seldom resorted to in our day: where it is attempted, it has a bracing effect; and whilst it weeds away hypocrites, drives the true-hearted closer to Christ, and so becomes a blessing. *Second*, Whilst the little remnant wrought hopefully "to revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish," there were quite a number of their kinsmen (verse 12) who dwelt at ease among the enemy, crying continually unto the faithful few (see margin), "Ye must

return to us"; in other words, they said, It is no use; your work will come to naught; it is impossible you can succeed; it will end in nothing. Some day you must take your place among us. Is there not something like this now? A remnant escaped from Babylon's bondage, freed from man's tradition, seeking unto the Lord as at the beginning. After the way called heresy, worshipping God, and exercising themselves to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men (Acts xxiv. 14-16). Their kinsmen in numbers *around* them; instead of being *with* them, mixed up with the ungodly. The relationship certainly is recognised. But the little separated companies are despised, slighted, and greeted with taunting words, akin to those used to the remnant in the days of Nehemiah. *Third*, Yet again were they hindered, and in this instance by those from whom it might have been least expected. Judah, who was of themselves, said (verse 10), "Our strength fails; the difficulties are unsurmountable; we are not able for what we have undertaken." This is the voice of the traitor, and herein lies the greatest danger, that the subtle lie of Satan finds an utterance from the mouths of those to whom saints have looked for guidance. Was not Judah the royal tribe, whose standard was pitched to the east of the tabernacle from whence the light comes, which ought to lead to liberty, not back again to bondage?

"Remember the Lord," "Every man to his work" (verses 14-15), were the watchwords wherewith Nehemiah rallied the people and raised their drooping spirits. Let the same words be as the blast of the bugle in our ears. Neither consider the opposers, nor get unduly occupied with the difficulties. "Fear not," "My Spirit remaineth among you," assure the final triumph and victory. Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not (Gal. vi. 9). P. H.

"How needful and happy to strive always to have a conscience void of offence, to walk in His light, to seek His power and will; this makes our days happy, our nights peaceful, our lives fruitful, our service effectual, and gives confidence in the world, sweetness in solitude, power in life, and tranquility and peace in trial or in death."—J. B. M.

## THE THREE CORONATIONS.

## I.

## THE CROWN OF THORNS

(John xix. 2).

No earthly glory can compare  
 With His exalted state,  
 Who, by His Word all things upholds ;  
 Whose power did all create.  
 Yet in response to our deep need  
 He laid His riches by ;  
 To poverty and pain He stooped,  
 Beneath our sins to die.  
 Creation's Lord, and Israel's King,  
 Met only shame and scorn,  
 And He who did salvation bring  
 Was mocked and CROWNED WITH THORN.

## II.

## THE VICTOR'S CROWN

(Heb. ii. 9).

But through that death of shame and woe  
 Our souls obtain release ;  
 His blood secures a full discharge,  
 And Christ is now our peace.  
 Justice approves the finished work ;  
 God's claims are satisfied ;  
 Death and the curse no more can hurt  
 The souls for whom Christ died.  
 The conquest gained, the victory won,  
 And Satan trodden down,  
 We see Him on the Father's throne  
 Wearing the VICTOR'S CROWN.

## III.

## THE KINGLY CROWN

(Rev. xix. 12, 15).

And though on earth His claim's disowned  
 To regal power and state,  
 As " King of Glory " He is crowned ;  
 In heaven His name is great.  
 And God's appointed time draws near,  
 When earth and heaven shall join  
 To seat Him on His KINGLY THRONE,  
 And own His right to reign.  
 With garments dyed, and vesture red,  
 He wears His " MANY CROWNS " ;  
 As " King of kings " His hosts He leads,  
 As " Lord of lords " HE REIGNS.

## Correspondence.

## TRAVELS IN THE LORD'S SERVICE.

On leaving British Columbia, we went to Seattle in the newly-formed State of Washington. On the Sunday morning eight of us remembered the Lord in the breaking of bread. We remained there a week. I had meetings in the open air as well as in a brother's house. Spent a day and a night in Portland, the chief city of Oregon, a busy town of 60,000 souls, 180 miles south of Seattle. Had the privilege of telling out " the old, old story." Several Christians, formerly in fellowship in different places, have recently gone there. From Portland we took the " cars " to San Francisco, a journey of 750 miles. Leaving Mrs. M. in San Francisco, I went to Los Angeles, 480 miles south of San Francisco and sought to help the little company who gather to the perishing. Had a week's meetings in the " city of the angels." The meeting-place is not in a central location, and it is to be hoped that the brethren will get a room nearer the business part of the city. Los Angeles is suffering through the effects of a " boom," which burst three or four years ago, but there is still an estimated population of from 70,000 to 80,000. The climate is splendid, and many consumptives make it their home. There are orange groves, lemon groves, olive yards, vine yards, and fruit orchards in all directions. On the same trees I noticed orange blossoms, green, and ripe oranges. Spent a night at Monte Vista, a small hamlet nestling in one of the valleys of the Sierra Madre foothills, where three brethren and a sister break bread each Lord's-day morning.

Returning to San Francisco for a few meetings, we began our journey eastward. We spent two days and nights in Salt Lake City. Had several hours' conversation with one of the dignitaries of the Mormon church ; visited the tabernacle, seated for 13,500 persons ; heard two teachers expounding phases of their belief. The Mormons were defeated at the polls in the last election at Salt Lake City and Ogden City, and the United States Government is enforcing the law regarding polygamy. Denver, Colorado, was our next halting-place. A beautiful city of 150,000 souls, 5000 feet above the level of the sea, close to the Rocky Mountains. A few brethren meet in a hall for breaking of bread, and preach the Gospel inside and outside as well. Spent a day and a night there, and then took the cars to Kansas City, Missouri. There are about fifty in fellowship, and the brethren are active and enterprising in the Gospel. Brethren John Smith and John M. Carnie were " holding forth " the Word of Life in a tent, and I was privileged to add my testimony to theirs to the wondrous love of God to guilty, lost, and ruined sinners. The audiences were good, and it encouraged and cheered us to see God's work being carried on with such zeal and energy. Kansas City, twenty years ago, would not have more than 8000 of a population, and now, according to this year's census, there are 130,000 inhabitants within the corporation limits. How important that these large centres of population should be attacked, and the work sustained and helped. Spent a few days

in Chicago, and were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. D. Ross. I was glad to see the young men in the west-end assembly, sounding aloud the wondrous story in the open air, in an interesting and attractive manner. I was privileged to help the brethren in their work in the open air and in the hall on Fulton Street. We were a couple of nights in Elgin, where Mr. Ross and his son, Charles, are holding nightly meetings in a tent. On to Toronto, where D. Munro and William Matthews are gospelizing under canvas. At Craighurst, in the Orillia district, found George O. Benner and Frank W. Crook pegging away in a tent and seeing souls passing from death unto life. At Peterboro met Robert Telfer and W. J. McClure, who have a tent in a country district near. After visiting Orillia, Warminster, Belleville, Trenton, Hamilton, and other "fishing grounds," we got the train for New York, took steamer there, and in less than seven days, under the good hand of our God, safely reached Liverpool on Wednesday, August 13.

ALEX. MARSHALL.

### "HIS SERVANTS YE ARE WHOM YE OBEY."

Romans vi. 16.

The spirit of obedience is the great secret of godliness. From the beginning the spring of evil has been self-will and independence of God. Obedience is the only right state of the creature, for independence is in sin. To keep this in mind will be a check, and help us in ordering our conduct. There is no case in which a Christian ought to do *his own* will: our great example said, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." We may be called upon to act independently of the highest worldly authority, but *not* on the principle of doing our *own* will. Entire self-renunciation alone enables us to walk in the full blessing that belongs to our position as the servants of God. The liberty of the saint is *never* license to do his own will—not self, but God, must be our centre.—*Jotting from a letter from W. G. S.*

## Questions and Answers.

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

Why is the tribe of Dan not mentioned in the list—Rev. vii. ?

When one believer is far from a gathering ought he alone to remember the Lord in the Breaking of Bread?

Does Deut. xxiii. 19, 20 forbid a brother in the Lord, in this dispensation, taking usury from another brother?

Do the words, "this day," in Ps. ii. 7, and quoted in Acts xiii. 33 and Heb. i. 5, refer to

the incarnation or resurrection of Christ? and if it be either, how are the verses to be reconciled with the eternal Sonship of Christ?

### CHILDREN AND STRANGERS AT THE BREAKING OF BREAD.

QUESTION 360.—Is it right for Christian parents to bring their children to the breaking of bread meeting, and to furnish them with hymn books to join in the singing? Further, is it scriptural to allow those to sing who have been put out of fellowship, but who come and occupy the back seats?

Ans. A.—When the remnant came up from Babylon with Ezra, they brought with them their "*little ones*," and all their substance" (Ezra viii. 21). It is a reproach to the truth that believers gathered unto the Name should have their children going where they cannot go themselves, or running wild while they are at the "fellowship meeting"; on the other hand, it can never be right to encourage children to be hypocrites by joining in the worship until they are born again. Christian parents should prayerfully instruct their children in the truth of man's ruin by nature, and that nothing can be acceptable to God from one who has not accepted the Lord Jesus; but care must be taken not to bring human authority, even *parental* authority, too far into the things of God. Let the truth act on the consciences of the children, remembering it is written, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. xxi. 16). With regard to "put away" persons the case is different, and what is needed is an increase of spiritual power in the assembly. In such a case it becomes the saints to be deeply humbled before God, because the solemn action of putting away has so little power on the conscience of the put away one. There is such a tendency in man's heart to resort to some human device to meet such difficulties, instead of resorting to believing, persevering prayer, and patient ministry of the Word. "God and the Word of His grace" is sufficient for all difficulties (Acts xx. 32).

G. A.

Ans. B.—The whole question of hymn singing is one that must be settled by each individual soul with God. It is to be feared that very few hymns can be truthfully sung by the whole of any assembled company. The spirituality of many is far too high for many dear saints to rise to; and hymns that introduce experience are often far in advance of many gathered. If this be so with the saints actually partaking at the table of the Lord, then the same principle applies to any other persons present; let them beware how they sing, in the presence of God, words they mean not with the heart. From Col. iii. 16, and Eph. v. 19, 20, we learn that the *heart* must be engaged in singing, and from 1. Cor. xiv. 15, the *intelligence*. The passing of a hymn book is a matter of courtesy; but the godly parent will surely instruct his child about the solemnity of singing unmeant words, and as for a believer out of fellowship who may be present, such know the order of the house of God, and the character of the God with whom they

have to do, and they stand upon their own responsibility to Him.

W. W. F.

**Ans. C.**—The Master said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xix. 13-15), and again, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise” (Matt. xxi. 16). These sayings of the Lord were uttered on two occasions: one was when the *disciples* would have kept the young children back from being brought to Him that He might bless them; and the other, when the religious *scribes and priests* would have had Him silence the children’s hosannas. Are we not putting ourselves much in the same position as the disciples and priests, when we ask questions such as this? Is not the quiet hour spent by the Lord’s disciples round His table, and in His presence, as much calculated to infuse into the mind of the children the reality of that faith which their parents profess as their attendance at Gospel meetings and Sunday-school? and may not the bringing of children to the breaking of bread meetings with their parents have a tendency to influencing their young hearts and preparing them for conversion?

**Editor’s Note.**—The presence of the children at the Passover is recognised in Ex. xii. 26, and the questions they would naturally ask as to what the ordinance meant were to be the occasion of instruction in the things of God.

The principle laid down in 1 Cor. vii. 14, secures that they shall not be treated in any sense as ceremonially unclean, but as those who, though, it may be, as yet unregenerate, are nevertheless being brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

The responsibility thus laid upon the “father,” as head of the house (Eph. vi. 4), clearly demands that he shall lead them on by precept, example, and authority, in ways which are of the Lord’s appointing. What Christian parent would not seek to preserve his children from the pitfalls of intemperance or immorality? And in like manner is it not also his responsibility to preserve them from the entanglements and defiling influences of false and worldly religion?

If this be granted, then it can only be brought about by their hearing and seeing that which is of God. Faith can thus count upon God to bless to them even the witnessing of that which He has appointed as the “showing of the Lord’s death.”

Care is necessary that becoming behaviour be inculcated and maintained, else the presence of children, left to themselves, may become a serious disturbance to the worship. 1 Cor. xiv. 23, shows that the place of assembling was intended to be accessible to any who desired to be present.

If such as are present to hear and see are to be benefited, whether old or young, it can only be as they are enabled intelligently to follow, though not necessarily to join in, that which is being done. It is therefore, we judge, right that they should in all courtesy be provided with Bible and hymn book, the responsibility being with them as to their joining in the singing. Only let us see that we do not encourage or sanction in any way that which is false and hypocritical.

The same principle applies to those “put away.” It is part of Divine discipline, and consequently Divine love, to separate such as God so judges from our company as regards every act of fellowship. But still their access to the place of assembling is not to be barred, for they also may receive blessing through hearing and seeing that service from all part in which their sin has separated them.

#### WOMEN ADDRESSING MIXED AUDIENCES.

**QUESTION 361.**—What would be the scriptural course for an assembly to take with a sister who persists (honestly believing it to be of God) in addressing mixed audiences of men and women.

**Ans. A.**—Has the assembly in question acted toward the sister according to 1 Tim. v. 2? Have they told her that not what she *honestly believes, but what God has written* is to decide the matter? Have they pointed her to the following scriptures:—“Let the woman learn in silence” (1 Tim. ii. 11), and “keep silence” (1 Cor. xiv. 34)? We are persuaded that if *the honesty she previously possessed be genuine*, it will speedily lead to a repentant acknowledgment of the truth as taught in the foregoing scriptures. T. Bd.

**Ans. B.**—If any sister in the Lord were to attempt ministry of the Word in the assembly, our path is clear. We must apply to such an one 1 Cor. xiv. 34, and similar scriptures, and the godly soul would doubtless bow to the Lord’s expressed mind, and fall readily into the place assigned to her. But from the wording of the present question we suppose it to have reference to the Gospel labours of a sister. In such a case, what scripture authority have we for interfering? Any brethren whose hearts are exercised may certainly make affectionate suggestions; but, *as servants*, we have no authority over each other—to our own Master we are severally responsible (Rom. xiv. 4, 1 Cor. iv. 4). If we feel, as doubtless we should in such a case, that the sister were slighting the word which had been set before her, all we can do is to show our disapproval by abstaining from practical help; but more than this we dare not do, except give ourselves to prayer, which is the crying need of the present time. W. W. F.

**Ans. C.**—Let guiding ones first prayerfully seek to have a clear apprehension of the teaching of Scripture on this subject. 1 Tim. ii. 8-15 ought to satisfy every one on this point. “Adam was first formed, then Eve”; and, “Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression,” are the two reasons God has given why the woman should never take the lead. Let the truth be clearly apprehended, and then patiently brought before such a sister, looking to the Lord to use His own truth to lead her to give up a service which is not according to His revealed will. Beyond this, an assembly has no power to act; but, if “God and the Word of His grace” are prayerfully resorted to, there is no doubt this difficulty will be removed. Till then let there be patient forbearance.

G. A.

**Editor's Note.**—There are many Christian women who are clear as to silence in the assembly, but who stoutly maintain that they are called of God to the public preaching of the Gospel, and point to the fruit of their labours in justification of their course of action.

We have already given what we gather to be the mind of the Lord on this matter (see "Women's Ministry," &c.), and would only say that we entirely agree with answer C, and add, that patient teaching of the assembly is as necessary as patient teaching of the woman in order that she may not be supported in an unscriptural course by impulsive and well-meaning but untaught brethren and sisters.

When God is appealed to, and the Word of His grace brought to bear upon a difficulty, in faith and love we are bound to stop there and wait on Him, unless specially directed in the Word to take further steps.

But impatient "flesh" is ever ready with a shorter remedy than the Divine way; hence the intervention of the Living God is forestalled by excommunication or some other unauthorised device. Unbelieving, impatient children are saying in their hearts that it is of no avail to wait upon God. "Something must be done," and so God is practically shut out and a human system is inaugurated.

#### DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.

**QUESTION 362.**—Where there are converts in one place speaking different languages, mutually unintelligible—*e.g.*, Chinese, Malays, Tamils—would it be contrary to the Word of God to hold separate meetings for the breaking of bread on the Lord's-day?

**Ans.**—1 Cor. xiv. might be profitably pondered in connection with this inquiry. If no interpreter were present, it could never be according to the mind of the Lord for saints speaking different languages to meet together thus, even for the holy purpose of breaking bread. It is difficult to see what glory could accrue to the Name of the Lord, or what edification could come to the saints through such a coming together. We should suppose such a case to be very rare. An interpreter is usually at hand, and when such is the case it is well and seemly for the saints to be all together, depending upon the Lord to overcome all difficulties; but when such a go-between is not to be found, it cannot be irregular for the saints to have separate meetings. When the eye is single and the heart simple these difficulties become small as they arise, and the Lord is able to supply grace so that they vanish altogether and the path becomes clear. W. W. F.

**Editor's Note.**—There is not necessarily any breach of fellowship in believers of different languages meeting apart. The object steadily kept in view by the Spirit in 1 Cor. xiv. is "edification." The whole order and ministry of the house of God is designed to answer this end. Nothing can have the sanction of God which is not to edification. There are places where the difficulty has been faced boldly, with the result that the Chinese meet together by themselves, and those who speak and

understand English also by themselves, and yet entire fellowship is maintained between the two assemblies, and the maximum of edification is attained.

#### THE SOUL OF THE BELIEVER AFTER DEATH.

**QUESTION 363.**—Please explain Luke xxiii. 43 and xvi. 26.—When a Christian falls asleep in Jesus where does his soul go to? and, is it active or not?

**Ans. A.**—Prior to the death of Christ, the souls of believers and unregenerate went to Hades; see Gen. xxxvii. 35, where Jacob speaks of going to Hades; and Acts ii. 25-31. From this scripture we infer that David's soul went there. Numbers xvi. 28-33—Korah, Dathan, and Abiram went down alive into Hades. Luke xvi. 26 shows the rich man (now poor), Abraham, and Lazarus there, with a great gulf fixed dividing the abodes of the saved and lost.

Christ died that He might destroy him that had the power of death, the devil, and deliver those who, in their lifetime, through fear of death had been subject to bondage; who only knew of a resurrection at the last day, and to whom death had afforded no pleasant outlook. But Christ, having obtained the keys of Hades and death (Rev. i. 18), went and proclaimed liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to the bound (Isa. lxi. 1); releasing the prisoners of hope (Zech. ix. 11, 12), and, ascending up on high, led a multitude of captives into paradise, where He entered both as the conqueror and Lord of Hosts (Ps. xxiv. 10), leading hosts to liberty; where He also was joined, later in the day, by the repentant thief whose legs were broken to hasten his release.

But we read in Matt. xvi. that the gates of Hades will not prevail against the Church. Those gates will not enclose a single saved one of this dispensation, for now the saint departs to be with Christ (who was not left in Hades), which is very far better than life here, not to speak of existence in Hades (Phil. i. 23), and, therefore, Paul was willing rather to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8); for to die was gain (Phil. i. 21), which indicates conscious enjoyment beyond the sweetest communion here. The word, Hades, refers only to the place of departed spirits, though differently rendered grave, pit, and hell; all went there before the death of Christ (except, say, Enoch and Elijah), but since, only the unsaved.

R. H. P.

**Ans. B.**—Before the Lord's crucifixion, good and bad were together in Hades (1 Sam. xxviii. 19, Luke xvi. 26); some in torment, some not (Luke xvi. 25, Ezek. xxxi. 16). Satan used to have the power of death, and it was the Lord's object to destroy this (Hab. ii. 14, 15, Hos. xiii. 14, Isa. xxv. 8, Ezek. xxxvii. 12). The death of the high priest set prisoners free from the cities of refuge (Num. xxxv. 25). After our Great High Priest's death, He set the captives free (Eph. iv. 8-10). According to the Scripture (Isa. xlix. 25 and liii. 12) He now has the keys of Hades and death (Rev. i. 18). The thief on the cross went direct to paradise. We depart to be with the Lord. O. B.



## GOD'S CHURCH and GOD'S CHURCHES.

AN ADDRESS BY HENRY DYER.\*

THERE are two passages in the Book of the Revelation which will help us in treating of this important matter. First, as a passage on the subject of God's *one* united *Church*, let us read Rev. i. 4, 5—"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and *the prince* of the kings of the earth" (that is, the ruling power, not king, that He will be in the millennium). After this goodly benediction there follows the uplifted praise of John's hymn: "Unto Him that loves us" (it is a *present* love), "and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (a past and completed thing), "and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father" (or "a kingdom, priests, &c.;" *i.e.*, not a reigning kingdom yet, but a spiritual kingdom as to worship). It was intended of Israel from the first that they should be a kingdom of priests; but their failure came in, and for the time they have lost it; so now He makes it true of us. "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." And may He quickly come and take His power and reign. "Behold, He cometh with clouds." John in vision sees the very thing he longed for in his former words—"And every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth" (or better, "all the tribes of the land," for there will not be a tribe but shall be partaker in the guilt of Antichrist; but out of every tribe there will be a sealed remnant, as in chap. vii.) "shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen."

I have read these verses because they contain that line, "Unto Him that loves us"; the blessed entire "us" of the whole saints of God. God's one united Church. But now let us read verse 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (that is, on the blessed first day of the week), "and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am

Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven *churches* which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." These churches are mentioned according to their geographical outline, beginning northward and going round eastward, making an entire circle round their Master in the midst. "And I turned to see the voice that spake" (or, was speaking) "with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden lampstands." Not, as of old, one lampstand with seven branches, but seven distinct lampstands, round the Master, and each standing on its own spot. "And in the midst of the seven lampstands one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about *the paps* with a golden girdle." Mark here how the Lord takes the glory of manhood along with the tenderness of the woman. "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace" (and therefore fitted to walk about among the seven churches); "and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars" (that is, as we are told in verse 20, the *angels* of the seven churches): "and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." The sword of which, I trust, we have oft felt the sharpness; first wounding, and then healing. "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." Mortality could not bear the glory of the wondrous Lord. "Who only hath immortality," says Paul, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." However much loving and loved, no *mortal* man can face that presence. Two have seen Him in His glory: the sinner, Saul of Tarsus, and he was crushed to the ground and blinded; the other, John, the beloved disciple, and he, too, sank under its power. O that we may more see the Lord, and learn that holy reverence *which bows before His presence*.

I have read these two passages, one for the sake of God's own Church, and the other for God's churches. I do not say "seven" only, but, taking it in the sense of God's sevens, *viz.*, the complete number of all local churches,

\* Issued as a small Penny Book.

though they be innumerable, yet all in direct connection with Himself.

First a word as to that sweet view of God's universal Church. "Unto Him that *loves* us, and washed us" (or loosed us) "from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us" (the whole of His spiritual Israel, in whatever corner of this wide world found) "a kingdom" (not reigning, but), "priests." This aspect of His Church links itself with what we were considering recently, in the Lord's threefold question to Peter, "Lovest thou Me?" *i.e.*, if thou lovest Me serve the Church that I love, and never turn aside from the service. All service in the Church must ever be from the spring of God-wrought *love*. Just as we have that glorious parenthesis of 1 Cor. xiii., in the midst of God's appointments as to order and service in His Church. "I show you a more excellent way," even than speaking with tongues, *viz.*, Do you love it, that Church for which Christ died? for though you may be the very ablest expounder, though you may work miracles as Elijah, yet without love you will not edify the Church, or render service acceptable to our God: because you are not in the line of His supreme relationship to the Church, *viz.*, the love that was seen at Calvary, and which is seen now. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." O beloved, I like to think that we are not out of touch with our last subject. Jesus says, With all the love with which your heart burns for Me I bid you care for My lambs and My sheep upon earth, to feed and to shepherd My flock; to distinguish the difference between the lambs and the sheep, and not only know how to feed but how to shepherd. Remember that He loves the Church and every labourer in it; and all the saints are labourers more or less; not a single saint but may shepherd or edify some fellow-saint. And what must the care be? Not cold-hearted, proud-hearted; not with much head knowledge and a dictatorial spirit, but in unison with the word we have read, "Unto Him that loves us." Now in this aspect of God's whole Church our business is mainly in giving thanks for it, and in praying for it. Let me turn all I know of the saints and of their condition into praise for what I hear of God-glorifying ways in

them, and to a deep word of sorrow at its divisions and its strifes. It is not a little thing that the moment you believed you were baptised by one Spirit into the one body of Christ, and it becomes you to ask for grace to fill your little part in relationship to the whole. But you will say that this is rather general and vague, and only touches my business as I read God's word about the Church, and as I bear it in my heart in praise, thanksgiving, or prayer. I cannot know all by name, and never even heard of the great majority of them. This is quite true, and therefore I pass on to the second part, for there are "*churches*" as well as the one "Church."

It is a remarkable thing that God has been pleased to call the saints of each locality by the same name of "church," by which also He calls the whole. Directly I come to this point, other thoughts arise, and other privileges come up, in connection with those of my own locality whom I often see, whose smiles I enjoy, or whose tears I feel for: the saints of my personal acquaintance. This double use of the word "church" of itself contains a lesson. The word "church" means a "called-out thing," and as the whole has been called out from time into eternity, so are the saints of any particular locality called out of the darkness and wickedness of their locality, and the saints of some other place from the darkness and wickedness of their locality; whether we speak of the church in Paris, or the church in Singapore, it is of the saints called out of the wickedness of Paris or of Singapore. So I am interested to find that God has not only a sweeping eye for the whole, but so distinguishing an eye for each, and never confounds one with another. And if the seven be multiplied by seventy or seven hundred, He knows every church and does not confound any single one with another among the hundreds. In one of these churches the Lord says, "I know where thou dwellest"; and 'tis not where Ephesus dwells, or Smyrna; but He said this of Pergamos—"Even where Satan's throne is." How perfectly He distinguishes—even as a parent between his many children. And He calls them all by the name of "churches": first, because of what He has called them out from, and then of what He has called them out to. Paul says of his Thessalonian saints,

that they would be to him his crown of rejoicing "in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming." The whole of the redeemed will be found round the throne of God and of the Lamb, one Church for ever; but there will be Thessalonian saints in their distinctness, and London saints in theirs, and the Lord distinguishes between them. And Paul will know his Thessalonian saints, and John will know his Asiatic saints. How accurate is the eye of our God!

Hence I must learn my relationship to this or that local church. And first, I would make my remarks encouraging. Turn now to the second passage we read. In it the Divine Master gives a vision of Himself in every part rich with instruction. A circle of objects is seen all around Him, all alike as lampstands, yet He knows their difference; and He is in the midst of the whole. Thus we learn, first, that He is equally near to each church. He was in the midst of them all. Two of them He could altogether praise, but they were not a bit nearer to Him than the other five. Has He pushed Laodicea far away or put Ephesus into a corner? Nay; He has them all around Himself, and all equally near, although He does not treat all alike. Let this blessed truth be to the comfort of each and every assembly! O Jesus, Son of God, Thou art in the midst of all Thy churches, wherever they be. O how this instantly hallows all assemblies! And mark, it is thus He binds the assemblies, first to Himself, and secondly to each other. John saw no golden chains, not even a silken thread, tying those lampstands to each other; the one link to each other was the link to Himself, sufficient for the whole and for each. Mark, also, our Lord does not define the extent of the locality of each lampstand. There is nothing here of the territorial view of human or man-made "districts," but simply those whom the Lord reckoned to be living near enough to each other to be bound together, and to come together to meet with the Lord; but no definition of area. He keeps all such details to Himself, but watches the saints of the locality, not only to see the state of the individual but of the community, and to see whether they are building up each other, or are content simply with coming together on

the Sundays. This is cheering for us in moving about amongst the different assemblies of our present time, however unlike the small and feeble assemblies now gathered to the Name of the Lord may be to that early local unity of all believers, which those seven lampstands then represented; for the word, "church," as here used by our Lord, whilst it was the most uplifting, was also the most catholic word, taking in all the saints of the city or locality. This unity of the local "church" has long since been broken in upon by the schism and sect-making of the present day. If "lampstand" be taken as an emblem of the *unity* of each local "church," as well as of its heavenliness and its likeness to the Master, then His solemn rebuke has long since taken effect, perhaps, everywhere—"I will remove thy lampstand *out of its place*, except thou repent." The local unity (*i.e.*, the church unity) of His saints is gone, very likely, everywhere (just as of old the Ark of God was lost to the tribes), as a just reproof for each "church" not having collectively repented.

But the Lord's same love to His own remains; and wherever any obey His Word, and gather to Him alone, the essential marks of His ancient lampstands are found more or less, and this He implies by His seven-fold repeated word: "He that hath an ear, let *him* hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

*To be concluded in next No.*

### SOMETHING WRONG.

I HAVE been reading in a book, written in Ireland in 1860, about the revival commencing in previous year, '59. It made my heart glad as I read of the wonderful work. As far as one could trace, its precursor appeared to be *prayer*. I do think that real prayer, both in the closet and unitedly, will have to precede any further revival. Don't you think there must be something wrong somewhere, when, spite of all the simple and oftentimes even eloquent preaching amongst us, yet results, alas, alas, too often *nil*. I don't want to be a croaker, and I know the Gospel is indeed the *power of God*, yet I feel there is something wrong! May God help us to find out what it is, and remedy the defect.—*Extract from a Letter.*

## THE CHIEF BUSINESS OF THE CHILD OF GOD.\*

AN ADDRESS TO BELIEVERS BY ROBT. C. CHAPMAN.

Scriptures read, Colossians ii. and iii.

**I**N connection with the words, "The mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" (ch. ii. 2), I would remark that there is a difference between what is called "the mystery of God" and that which is not a mystery. In Romans i. 19, 20, we see that which may be known of God in creation is manifest to every child of Adam, for God hath showed it to them. Ps. xix. tells the same thing. But let us see what things the natural man is not bound to know until they are revealed to him.

Read ch. ii. 3, 9, 10: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. . . . In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him." The meaning of being complete in Christ is this—the believer is completely furnished and supplied in the fulness of Christ with all riches and treasures of knowledge. It does not mean that he is completely redeemed and justified (though all that is in it). Hence the charge in verse 8: "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." There is a sense in which the wise of this world may be well called

PHILOSOPHERS;

and there is another sense in which their philosophy is "vain deceit." I say this because I am specially desirous to commend the Scriptures in their glorious excellency to the heart's meditation of the children of God. Supposing the wise men of this world meddled only with steamboats and railways, taking up their attention with sounding the depths of the ocean, or scanning the stars with the telescope; if they shut themselves in their investigations within the bounds of this old creation and time, they might be entitled to the name of "philosophers," but the moment the wise man of this world meddles with God and Divine things, he is a fool; and when he deals with eternity, and the soul's relation to God, he is the mere dupe and tool of Satan; hence the words, "vain deceit."

Turn to 1 Cor. ii. 7-10: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery" (the word, mystery, here is used in the sense I have given it), "even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The things of creation merely, great and important as they are in giving light to man's natural conscience, and showing him his obligation to God as his Maker, in comparison with what is in the Son of God, are but the shallows; all the deep things of God are in Christ crucified, and glorified.

I again ask you to consider Col. ii. 10: "Ye are complete in Him." That is, we are completely supplied in Christ for acquaintance with God. The Spirit of God tells us, by the apostle John, the same great truth. In John i. 18, we read this: "No man hath seen God at any time;" the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father—He who was acquainted with all the secrets of that bosom—He hath declared, or expounded Him.

How are we to come at the treasures in Christ while here? Turn to Col. iii. 16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." The Word of Christ stands here as distinguished from, or contrary to, "the doctrines and commandments of men." In passing, I would say that all the cavillings of the natural man against the Scripture are only a fresh testimony to what the Scripture says touching the blindness and foolishness of the unregenerate heart. I counsel the Christian, especially when you meet with

CAVILLERS AND DISPUTERS,

and professed unbelievers, don't reason with them, testify to them. Testify that you were once blind as they are, but now you see by the Spirit of God; that you were once deaf, but now you have circumcised ears and heart given you by the Spirit of God. Bring them into God's presence as guilty, with their mouth

\*From Addresses by R. C. Chapman. Just Published, 3d. Witness Office Glasgow.

shut before God. That is the only way in which you ought to deal with them, viz., as God's witnesses; you ought never to reason with them. They would, if they could, pull God down from His throne, and take His place; that will be seen presently, when the Lord will come in His glory. But now we have in Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and it is through the Word of Christ that we can be thus furnished. We are to lay up the Word in the storehouse of our heart.

Turn to John xvii. 8: "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them." Also verse 17: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." The Word of Christ is the whole Book of God, for therein is the truth of God complete and fruitful. John xvi. 12, 13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." Mark these comprehensive words, "He shall glorify Me." So we have our Bibles, and then we have the Spirit of Truth sent by the Son of God from the Father, not only to quicken us from death to life, to seal us as the children of God, to deliver our hearts from perplexities and doubts as to our having eternal life, but a still higher business; great indeed the work of quickening from death to life, great the work of sealing the name of Christ upon the soul and assuring the heart of the child of God that he is a child of God, but there is a still higher business, that is, fashioning the mind of the believer so that he may be constantly well-pleasing to God.

In Col. ii. 1, the apostle says to these Colossian saints, "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you," &c. We see from the closing verses of chap. i. the cause of this conflict: "Christ, in you the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (i. 27, 29). What does he mean by presenting every man

#### PERFECT IN CHRIST?

Not perfectly saved or justified, but perfectly well-pleasing to God: "That their hearts

might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" (ii. 2). In other words, he desires that every child of God might walk in the fulness of the Spirit's communion with the Father and with the Son. If you look through the other epistles of Paul you will find the same burning desire in His heart for all saints. He is always bent upon leading them onward, so that they may *fully* please God; walking in the constant fellowship of the Spirit with the Father and with the Son.

Turn to 1 Thess. ii. 10-12: "We exhorted . . . and charged every one of you . . . that ye would walk worthy of God." That is the business of life which, *every* hour of *every* day, *every* child of God should be engaged in. We have been exhorted by the apostle to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly; not piece-meal, but richly. We may say, as it dwelt in the Son of God Himself. Of course you remember Psalm i. He was the walker in that Psalm. The perfect One in obedience, and, therefore, perfect in the Spirit's continual teaching. Supposing a child of God merely seeks to pass through the world creditably, how will he deal with the Scriptures? He will seek to find out, according to his own thoughts, that which may suit him in his case. But, if he has the higher aim, to walk worthy of God, he will search out all the Scriptures; he will account the whole Bible his own; he will not fail to read every book in the Scriptures, and every book in the order which the Spirit of God has penned them. Every book of Scripture is penned by the same wisdom of God's Spirit that we see in the Son of God coming into the world. We ask you, did the Son of God take on Him the servant's form? Then, how was He made in the likeness of man? By the Spirit. How did He walk through the world? By that same Spirit. We also see from Hebrews ix. 14, that "Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." He was quickened by the Spirit, and now He has sent the Spirit to dwell in us in His especial office as Comforter; also to glorify Him; to receive of Christ's, and show it to us. Then again he says, "He will guide you into all truth." But

if the child of God has not this high aim of walking worthy of God, he has not the Spirit's promise of leading him into the truth necessary to his walking with God. Hence, if the children of God just read the Word to find out something that comforts and helps them on in their journey, they will be stunted children, and will not be growing up into servants and friends of Christ.

Turn to John xv. 14: "Ye are my friends." Now comes a very weighty word, "if." The highest possible blessedness,

#### THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE DIGNITY,

on earth, are in the words which follow: "If ye do whatsoever I command you." We are called to friendship with the Son of God, the King of Glory. The blessedness, dignity, and glory of this friendship belong only to the children of God. The world knows nothing of it; and they desire to know nothing of it. Does it belong to all the children of God? They all ought to enjoy it; but then there is that little word "if,"—"If ye do whatsoever I command you." If you are intent on obeying, and walking worthy of God, it must of necessity follow that the obedient one deal aright with the Scriptures, after the pattern of the blessed Lord Himself. I would say, first of all, that every book of the Scriptures has its own order, and that order is not a whit less of the Spirit, devised in infinite wisdom, than was His working and teaching, as we see in Christ. Again, each book has not only its own Divine order, but it has also its own form of words; these are as much Divine as the order. O let us lay this to heart: it is not possible, shall I say, for fallen man, it is not possible for the highest angels of God, to have conceived the truth in Christ revealed in the Scriptures; hence we read, "That now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." First, man was bound to know his Maker, and I have no question that for Adam to be, and to worship, were things of the same moment. I know that the wise men of this world make Adam to have searched out things, and then to have come to the conclusion that there is a wonderful Creator. Man was made in the image of God. But he knew nothing of the future, and secret mysteries of God's

heart revealed in Christ. But now, by the Church, angels have some intimate knowledge of God that they could not have had if left to their natural faculties.

There is no single truth of Scripture that is possible for any creature to have invented. For my part, I would disdain to prove the Scriptures true; they prove themselves. Am I hungry, and have bread set before me; I don't wait to prove that it is bread, I at once partake of it. Whatever you and I receive to the nourishment of our souls, we receive it upon its own testimony, not because men reason about it, and show that it was found in some ancient manuscript; we receive it because God's Spirit reveals it as God's mind to our souls.

Then, as to the order of the books of Scriptures: if you examine, you will see that every book, even the smallest (I call the Epistle to Philemon a book; also the second and third Epistles of John), each has its own order. Carefully observe it, and then you will find the form of sound words is as much the work of God's Spirit as the matter and order.

I cannot but affirm this. It may do good to some here when I say the late revision of Scripture has done some good; the best good that it has done is to show that *nothing can be done*. The great building of truth is just the same. Here and there is a little chip off some stone; but the great temple of truth is just as it was, and ever will be.

Every one of us is bound to use what time he has for reading the Word. And let us watch against

#### WASTING TIME.

I am bound, according to what God has given me of time, to read the Word. I am only a beginner. I began seventy-one years ago to read and search the Scriptures, and now, as then, this blessed Book gives me joy. The further I search into the Scriptures, the more unsearchable it becomes.

And then you will find this aiming to walk worthy of God will make you to be a blessing to the Church of God—a peace-maker, but not a peace-breaker. You will be a witness in your families. Each one, whatever your station in life may be, whether master or servant, is a witness for God in his outward calling, whatever that may be. And when we

shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, what shall we then wish we had been during this brief span of time? We shall never then regret having endeavoured to walk worthy of God.

The Spirit is set forth in Scripture as a dove. If I grieve Him, I shall mar my peace; but I shall still have peace with God as a sinner saved. Col. iii. 15: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called." Peace with God is common to all believers; that is to say, being by nature at enmity with God we are now reconciled to God by faith in the precious blood of Christ, we are justified for ever; but to have the peace of God is to be in communion with God in the peace which He Himself enjoys now. He takes His survey of all His works; He sees the present, the past, and the future at once, and He sees all in the blessed hands of the Lord Jesus; and from day to day, and hour to hour, He sees that Christ is accomplishing His will, and He is at perfect peace. Now then, if instead of seeking always to get something from God to help us on in our journey, and we seek nothing more, we shall have purposes and wishes that are perpetually subject to disappointment; but if we seek to walk worthy of God, we are one with God in His purpose. Then the peace of God shall keep our heart and mind, and we shall not be vexed, troubled, and dejected because our purposes have not been realised. We ask God for a piece of silver and He gives us a talent of gold. The whole Book is our property from Genesis to Revelation, and the teaching of the Spirit to us is not to seek after wealth and station, but to do the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

---

"THE lion, and the bear, and the giant are food for the faith of the ruddy stripling, unknown, and despised, and persecuted, but dependent on God; but giant lust is too much for him when he is crowned and at rest. Never taking a step before his crowning without consulting God, but in one instance—the Philistine alliance—where he is chastened for it. But afterwards when he uses his blessing for self, far from consulting God, and being dependent upon Him for blessing, he would make God Himself his debtor."—DR. MULOCK.

## THE CARNAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN IN ABERDEEN BY  
J. R. CALDWELL.

Romans viii. 5-9.

IN this passage we have put in opposition to one another the carnal mind and the spiritual mind. They are antagonistic to one another just as much as fire and water. We have here "those that are in the flesh," and "those that are in the Spirit"; and this is just another way of describing the "children of God" and the "children of the devil." Those who are in the flesh are those who are possessed of the carnal mind, and we read here what this carnal mind is, viz., "enmity against God." "So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God."

I do not know if there are any here who have not been born again—in a state of nature. This is a solemn word for such. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." There is a solemn thought in this for God's children too. In as far as we have intercourse with those who are in the flesh it can only be on the level of fleshly things, for they cannot rise to the level of spiritual things. Never for one instant, until they are converted and made partakers of the Spirit of God, can they enter into a spiritual thought, word, or conversation, a spiritual action, purpose, or affection. They cannot rise to it. Like water, they can only rise to their own level. The top of my house is just on a level with the reservoir which supplies Glasgow with water. If my cistern were six inches higher it would get no water, for water cannot rise higher than its own level.

Even so, the children of this world, the unregenerate, cannot rise above the level of earthly things. "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth"; He that cometh from heaven speaketh of heavenly things, that is, the Son of God. What a solemn thing, then, is it to join affinity with those who are "in the flesh." Only think of a Christian man marrying an unconverted woman. She cannot enter for one moment into any spiritual thought or purpose of his. He must come down to the level of earthly things to have any intercourse with her at all. How disastrous for such to be yoked together!

Only think of a man entering into business partnership with another who cannot look at any transaction from a spiritual point of view. I never knew of one going into business with an unconverted man to prosper. How can any one enter into the service of God, or into Church fellowship, with those who "cannot please God." They cannot rise to spiritual things. They have not the Spirit of God, and, therefore, must look at everything from a fleshly standpoint. It is the carnal and the spiritual mixed up together: that which God hates.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16), etc. Ver. 17: "So that ye cannot," this should read, "so that ye may not do the things that ye would."

Here we have two principles in the one person. In the eighth chapter of Romans we have those who are "in the flesh," the unregenerate, and those who are "in the Spirit," the born again. Here we have another aspect of the truth. It is the flesh in the believer, and the Spirit in him. It is these two different principles both working in the same person. In God's reckoning the believer is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." In His grace, He looks at the Christian, not as a branch of the corrupt Adam tree, but as in the new man—Christ. Not as in the flesh, but as in the Spirit. But that does not mean that the flesh is not in us.

The flesh is in God's sight reckoned dead, yet it is in us in all its power, lusting contrary to the Spirit. The carnal mind can assume many different forms. There are "lusts of the flesh and of the mind." There is the lust which leads a man to the dram-shop. That is one form of the carnal mind; another, that leads one to seek, like Diotrefes, a pre-eminent place among the children of God. It assumes many different forms whereby God's people are apt to be deceived. As long as we are here the flesh will desire contrary to the Spirit, and the desire of the Spirit will ever be contrary to the flesh. They are the opposites of each other. This conflict will continue till we get rid of the flesh altogether, and that will be when the Lord comes. Blessed prospect!

Then we will be done with the conflict. We will then have a spiritual life in a spiritual body, and all our surroundings will be in harmony with the mind of God.

1 Cor. iii. 1-4. The apostle does not speak here to a mixed multitude of converted and unconverted. He is writing to the church of God at Corinth, to saints in Christ Jesus, to those of whom, throughout the epistle, he speaks with the utmost confidence, telling them that they are washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. vi. 2). That is the class of people he is addressing, yet he says of them, or, at least, of many of them, that they are "yet carnal."

That does not mean that they are in the flesh, in the sense of Rom. viii., unsaved people; but it means that, instead of having grown in Spirit and in the mind of Christ into spiritual manhood, they remained weak, and stunted, and feeble, and just like little babes; and so he says, "Ye are carnal."

One point before we proceed. The Corinthian church contained those two classes. It contained the carnal as well as the spiritual. And the church of God must ever have a basis large enough to include both. I don't say we ought to be carnal. God forbid! I hope to show what it is to be spiritually-minded, that we may desire the better thing. But I say this, that any attempt to form a selection church, that is a church including only those who are spiritual, will come to grief.

God means that the carnal should be with the spiritual, the young with the old, the weak with the strong, and the church of God must have a basis broad enough to include all these diversities.

Many think how delightful if we could get a little assembly where all are spiritual. What would be the result? There would be no longer any need for long-suffering. This most precious of Divine graces would never be in exercise. The Beloved would come into His garden and look for His fruits, but there would not be a bit for Him. We need the spiritual to lead the carnal into a better mind, and we need the carnal to draw out the long-suffering of the spiritual. We need the young that our affections may be drawn out to care for the babes, to care for and guide them with parental love; and the weak are needed that the strong may bear their burdens. We need all this to draw out and develop our spiritual being. Hence the differences in the church



of God. The Spirit of Christ will be displayed more beautifully when we have all these different contrarities to deal with. So don't expect on earth to get a perfect church. Thank God we may have a church which takes all its authority, all its order, all its ways from the heavenly pattern. A church that appeals to nothing but the Word of God. A church where none but those quickened by the Holy Spirit are knowingly received, and where no name is acknowledged but the Name of the Lord Jesus. But if we think we will get a perfect church, nothing to contend with, nothing to call forth the exercise of patience, and the grace of long-suffering and forbearance, we make a great mistake.

For if we have a Scriptural church constructed according to the Word of God, it will also be a Scriptural church in this respect, that it will include the carnal as well as the spiritual, the young as well as the old, the weak as well as the strong.

Ver. 3. Now mark that expression, "Walk as men." It does not say as devils, but as men. It is not walking in open wickedness, though there were some whose life was such (1 Cor. v.). But this is not what is referred to here. He says, there are contentions among you, divisions, parties. Some say, "I of Paul," another, "I of Apollos," and another says, "Peter for me." They were ranging themselves on the side of men—excellent persons in themselves, and servants of God; but the fact that they were thus walking showed that they were carnal. There is no cure for those evils but the carnal becoming spiritual. It needed not so much the setting right of points of doctrine as the setting right of souls.

The carnal will fight, and fight on to the end. What is needed is the mind of Christ, and with this it is astonishing how easily we can become of the same mind in the Lord.

I have gone with a friend to the top of a hill, and he has pointed to some object in the distance. At first I cannot see it. He points his stick to it. I get my head close to his, and I look in line with his stick, and I see it now; but suppose I turn my back to it and say, "I don't see it!" you would just say, "You don't wish to see it." If spiritually-minded, we will ever seek to know

the mind of Christ, and to be of the same mind in the Lord. The spirit of opposition will die out; envy and strife and contention will be extinguished.

I don't intend to dwell upon the carnal mind. We know what it is. It is the mind of man. It is always for being uppermost. It is always in strife and unrest. "Let nothing be done through strife and vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."

I know so much more of my own corruption, of my own wickedness and evil, than I can possibly know of others, that I shall have no difficulty in esteeming others better than myself. (*"The Spiritual" will be given in next No.*)

### CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY AMONG THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

"From this day will I bless you" (Haggai ii. 19).

**A**N ecclesiastical position which is perfectly scriptural, though an excellent thing, is not sufficient to guarantee spiritual prosperity: the proof is supplied to us in the book of Haggai. The people had returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, the place where God had chosen to put His name, and yet the Divine blessing was wanting. The position was good; to leave Babylon was quite according to God's design. What was the matter?

Personal communion with God was neglected, and selfishness under false pretexes reigned supreme. Each ran to his own house, whilst the house of God was neglected. They had then, as to-day, very good reasons for not occupying themselves therewith; all furnished by selfishness. "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built" (Haggai i. 2). The absurdity of such reasoning is unmasked without pity by the prophet: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Consider your ways" (Haggai i. 4, 5). Is there not an analogy between the situation of that people and ours in the present day? By God's grace some of us have been brought out of the confusion of Babylon, and acknowledge

that the disciples of Christ are not of the world, as the Lord Himself is not of the world (John xvii.). This is God's doing.

But is there not often, indeed, in spite of this perfectly correct position, a realisation that Divine blessing is wanting. And the weak are disposed to believe that all is as well in Babylon as in Jerusalem. To what can this barrenness be attributed? To selfishness. Each runs to his own house, whilst the house of God is desolate, or in the language of the New Testament, "All seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ" (Phil. ii. 21). In olden times activity was not wanting, but the result was poor, because each worked *for himself*; and to-day there is much outward activity, but few satisfying results. Alas! is it not possible to maintain an outward religious mechanism, in an irreproachable manner, long after communion with God ceases to exist. You say, "That is all only too true; but is there no remedy, or must we partake in this sad affair?" No! God says, Consider your ways. And first as to prayer. How little we pray; and then how often are our prayers gangrened with selfishness. Our preachings, too, have often been petrified by want of love for perishing souls.

Then, when it has been a question of giving, what stinginess! The smallest coin is enough for God; whilst for self, what liberality!

All this says to us, "Consider your ways."

Awakened by the appeal of the prophet (Haggai i. 14), the people commenced to work for the house of God, encouraged by the assurance that His Word and His Spirit dwelt amongst them (Haggai ii. 5). From that moment the blessing of God began to descend on them: "From this day will I bless you" (verse 19). May this speak to us. Let us cease to live for self; and if deeply humbled on account of past and present failure, we seek grace to know and do God's will, as surely as did His people of old, so shall we also experience His blessing.—*Adapted from the French by S. N.*

THE best university for the saints of God is the bosom of Jesus. Loving and leaning go together. Leaning and learning are inseparable. He who would learn most must lean much.—J. T. S.

## THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

A KINGDOM is a vast system of government, implying power, authority, rule, and order. All this we have in the most perfect manner in the kingdom of God. His kingdom ruleth over all. God never at any time gives up the reins of government, however great the sin and rebellion of men and nations. He who ruleth over all, overruleth all to His own glory, and the accomplishment of His own purposes. Those who know and own this, and submit themselves to God, even though it be in acknowledgment of their own sin, are truly in and of the kingdom, *i.e.*, under His acknowledged authority, rule, and guidance, in His fear, and know the moral power of it in their souls.

If others profess to be in it, without the reality and moral power of it in their hearts, they are in it in a nominal sense only, with nothing before them but the judgment of the One whose authority they professedly own without really subjecting themselves to it. The kingdom of God must triumph finally, though it suffer long.

Thus much may be said about the kingdom in a general way. But that it does in different dispensations take different forms is obvious to all who know the Scriptures.

My object here is not to show the distinct purpose of God in each form, but that there are different forms of the kingdom. To see this is the greatest help—yea, absolutely necessary—to the understanding of the distinct character of the eternal purpose of God, and the character of blessing peculiar to each distinct dispensation.

The Lord said to His disciples, "The kingdom of God is within—or among you." Yet He teaches them at the same time to pray for the kingdom to come. Here, then, we have two forms of the kingdom: one present, the other future. And so diverse are these in character, that in one case a sword is sent on the earth, and houses are divided three against two, and two against three; in the other, peace and good will reigns among men. During the period of one, Satan is spoken of as the God of this world, and the world as lying in the hands of the wicked one, the

children of the kingdom as not being of the world; and the Lord says, "My kingdom is not of this world." "I pray not for the world," &c. In the other case Satan will be bound, and the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of Christ. He will then ask for the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, and it shall be given to Him (Ps. ii.); and God's will shall then be done on earth as it is in heaven. To be really in and of the kingdom, in one character of it, entails suffering and persecution; to be in it, in the other character, peace, joy, and glory. So while the kingdom is present in one form, and we are in it, we look for it in another—we look for His appearing and kingdom. The one is the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; the other, the kingdom and glory. In one form evil is present, the tares (the children of the wicked one), are allowed to grow up until harvest; in the other, He shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and every subsequent arising of sin shall meet with prompt judgment (Matt. xiii. 24, &c.). While this parable gives us the present form of the kingdom, it carries us on (especially in the interpretation thereof) to the time when it shall change its form and assume an entirely different character.

Finally, in the one case Christ is rejected by the world, which is under judgment; in the other, the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and everything that hath breath shall praise His name—all nations shall adore Him; the kingdom, power, and glory shall be His. His saints, with adoring hearts, say *now*, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom Jehovah delighteth to honour."

In Old Testament times, the kingdom of God was known in its general character as ruling over all, and so overruling all the kingdoms of men; yet all in relation to His people the Jews, and in view of their final deliverance and blessing according to promise, when His kingdom shall be manifested in glory, and Messiah be publicly declared King of kings and Lord of lords. The dispensation, too, was distinct and probationary.

In the New Testament the kingdom itself takes, in a more definite manner, a dispensational form (in connection with a rejected Messiah) for the administration of some

definite purpose of God; and this in quite a parenthetical way. For the Lord was presented to His people as Messiah their King, but, being rejected by them, this aspect of the kingdom is postponed, and it takes for the present a mystical form; and the Lord gives us several symbols of this latter form of the kingdom, likening it to this and that to teach us what God is doing in it. See Matt. xiii. and other passages in the gospels.

This aspect of the kingdom is not to be found in Old Testament Scriptures, as the Lord Himself says in the chapter referred to; "I will open My mouth in parables; *I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world*" (verse 35). Which words evidently apply to these symbols of the kingdom.

But though these parables, in the main, give us the secret form of the kingdom, yet they carry us on to the time when it shall change its form ("The harvest"; "The end of the age"; "When the Bridegroom comes"), and shall assume the character predicted in the Old Testament, its outward and manifested form, which it will take in connection with a *received* Messiah.

While we get nothing about the secret, or mystical form, of the kingdom in the Old Testament, we do get *very* much about the Messianic form there; indeed it is the great prospect of the Old Testament Scriptures, as it is also of the New, and the Jews (who ignore the present form), look for it to-day, and most assuredly it shall be brought about in God's own time. The New Testament Scriptures clearly show that it is only postponed for the accomplishment of some special, and newly revealed, purpose of our God.

Both these forms of the kingdom—*i.e.*, its present and future—are taught in the gospels and throughout the New Testament, with the different characteristics of each, as well as the great crisis when it passes from one form to the other, by the rapture of the Church, the judgments of God upon the earth, His special dealings with His earthly people in their land, and the coming of the Lord in majestic power and glory.

Seeing that this is so, *viz.*, that we have different forms of the kingdom, and distinct dispensations in connection therewith, presented

in the Scripture, we must consider in which form any particular passage treats of it, in order to a correct understanding of such passage. Hence a knowledge of the distinct characteristics of each greatly aids our understanding of the Scriptures. Otherwise, we shall be continually misapplying the word, and mixing up things that are distinct in themselves whatever may be their relative bearing upon each other.

The characteristics of the Messianic form are most clearly taught in the Old Testament. It is well, therefore, to study the kingdom with the terrible crisis and judgments introductory to it, as presented in the prophets; we are then in a better position to judge when this is spoken of in the New Testament. For I need scarcely repeat that the present form of the kingdom is very different from that spoken of in the Old Testament, which latter is spoken of in the writings of the apostles as yet future; while the present aspect of the kingdom is *peculiar* to the New Testament, and the era of Old Testament times was distinct from both. We are here speaking of what is strictly dispensational, and by no means deny that there is much moral teaching, precepts, &c., throughout the Scriptures that apply to the heart, conscience, and conduct, at all times.

Perhaps these few remarks will help our readers to understand how it is that while we look for the kingdom to come, yet in another sense we are in the kingdom, preach the kingdom, speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom, and should know the power of it in our souls even now. "For the kingdom of God is not in word only but in power."

But let us not forget that the deep counsels of God and the wondrous purposes of His grace are unfolded and being accomplished during the present form of the kingdom.

Neither let us forget that all God has said about the earthly reign and kingdom of Christ, and the restoration and blessing of Israel under His reign, as well as the subjecting of all nations to Him, shall certainly be fulfilled in God's own time and way.

J. H. B.

IN confessing Christ, we often fail through not keeping "*grace and truth*" in their proper harmony: both came by Jesus Christ, and in Him we never see them in collision.

## INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

MORE than twenty years have rolled away since the day that I had a commission to the house of an aged and venerable Christian. I saw there, among other things, one thing that struck me as very strange. At the door was suspended a slate, and on this slate a list of names, some of which were very heavily underlined, and among these names was my own. I learned afterwards, what I had already suspected, that this dear old man had a custom of writing on his slate the names of those for whom he felt particularly impressed to pray.

I cannot express how deeply humbled and restored I was, all through the faith with which this old servant of Christ wrestled for my soul. This intercession, of which I had now the knowledge, seemed to me like a peaceable guardian angel, who exhorted me and kept by my side, and combated for my soul, being still only a young man and very superficial.

The reader will probably agree with me, that we may all learn something good by the history of this old slate. All we who have an idea of what a life of prayer is, will agree that true intercession is the highest triumph, and the highest order of prayer. Egoism, which is the greatest hindrance to our sanctification, seems to be in it conquered. The man who has committed and disposed of his heart, his body, his soul, all that he is, and all that he has, into the hands of the Lord, bears now the souls of his fellow-travellers, with all their sufferings and their griefs, before the throne of love, and supplicates the Father of Spirits, the God of all Grace to sustain them by virtue of the Blood that flowed on Golgotha.

Prayer never impresses one so much with its grandeur and majesty as when we see that he who prays has completely put aside his own self, his own needs, and his particular griefs, and that he has entered into the experiences of those for whom he prays, only considering himself as a member of the community which suffers, struggles, and hopes. Each one can also say for himself that he never feels so powerfully the nearness of God, as when his prayer is transformed into a sincere intercession, stripped of "*I,*" and burning

with love. A prayer without intercession would be as a rose without perfume.

A glance into the Bible reveals to us the same thing. Solitary and isolated, Noah stands forward in the midst of a corrupted humanity. The ungodly torment and trample under foot the soul of this just man; but he never wearies lifting up the supplicating hands for those who mock him. Behold, again, Abraham; he stands before Jehovah, and down below in the fertile valley are stretched out the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They are devoted to destruction, and no person knows better than Abraham what this word signifies. "The crimes and the abominations of these cities have come up before God"; but hear his supplicating voice, as it is raised again and again towards God, wrestling for the lost. Further on we find a solemn exhortation to fathers and mothers, in the fact that Job, when his sons and daughters were celebrating a feast, rose each time at early morn and offered burnt offerings for them. How many fewer prodigal children there would be if all fathers and mothers would practise this holy service. Moses, the friend of God, lifted ever and anon his voice in prayer for the people who rendered his life so bitter. And when God in His just anger wished to destroy this people, Moses tied His hands with this almost dreadful prayer, "Blot me rather from Thy book." Likewise, fifteen hundred years later, the apostle Paul, in an ejaculation of patriotism, which appears to us excessive, cries, "I could wish to be separated from Christ for my brethren, who are my well beloved according to the flesh." It is thus also that the Psalms abound with intercession for all the people of Israel, and even for the nations of the world. The prophets in their prayers thought of and made intercession for all Israel, and even for the nations of the world.

If we pass on to the New Testament, it is needless to state that all the prayers of the apostles are penetrated with intercession. We have only to read their epistles to discover throughout, the trouble that they gave themselves to exhort the little flocks of young Christians who were scattered here and there, whom they had never seen, and would never

see on the earth; to exhort them, I say, to pray the one for the other. This intercession ought to be an invisible tie, powerful and heavenly, which unites us in an indissoluble manner, the one with the other and with the Head of the church. Furthermore, the epistles are full of invitations to pray "for all the saints, even for all men, and specially for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives."

Let one notice particularly this, "*in order that*," if he wishes to understand what power the apostles recognised in intercession. The apostles frequently assured the assemblies that they persevered to pray for them, and they consoled themselves on the other hand with the thought that the Christians remembered them. It is truly touching, especially to all preachers of the Gospel, that Paul, the apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, begged with importunity the intercession of the assemblies, and expected from it, for himself, the greatest results. He hoped to obtain thereby increase of zeal to preach the Gospel, and even deliverance from captivity (Eph. vi. 18, and following verses). And Peter was actually delivered from prison at the very hour when the church at Jerusalem was praying for his deliverance. Likewise, when Paul in the midst of the raging sea wrestled day and night with God for the souls of his fellow-passengers, there appeared to him, in the middle of the night, an angel who carries this happy message, "God hath given thee all the souls who are in the vessel." This word *given* is the response to the voice of the apostle who had commended to the mercy of God these soldiers, sailors, and criminals; and behold after the shipwreck there lacked not one. In short, the love and the grace of God are changed throughout into intercession, and intercession is the strength of our love.

But what ought we to say now of the Lord Jesus? All His life and all the love that filled His heart were dispensed for us. All His thoughts and sentiments took the form of prayer, and one can therefore well say that all His life on earth was only one long intercession.

There is something remarkable in the fact that the high priest carried on his breast the breastplate on which were inscribed the

names of the twelve tribes of Israel; at each respiration the breastplate, with the names that were carried on the heart, ascended and descended. Alas! the intercession of the high priest of the Old Testament was often a very miserable thing; it is only in Jesus, the perfect High Priest, whose whole life was one great act of devotion to the salvation of lost humanity, it is only in Him that is fulfilled this magnificent symbol, designated by the breastplate. All the prayers of Jesus (and all His life was a life of prayer) are full of intercession. At the entrance of His sufferings He pours out His heart with as much majesty as gentleness in the prayer of John xvii., and makes no allusion to His own grief. Surrounded on all sides by floods of grief, He assures Peter, who walks on the verge of the abyss, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And when the spotless Lamb, suspended between heaven and earth, opens His mouth, His first word is a prayer for His enemies.

But, now, in His celestial glory, He carries the names of His people on His breast, and appears before the face of God as the merciful and faithful High Priest and Intercessor (Heb. ix. 24; 1 John ii. 1).

The intercession of the Great High Priest for all the Church always ascends as a cloud of fragrant incense to the throne of grace; and it would be for each one of us a glory to cast a grain into His censer. The prayer which is offered in heaven for all the body, by our Head, should resound in all His members. Should not that appear to us a sublime privilege, to be able to meet with all the redeemed before the throne of God? If we do it with a heart truly fervent, it will be a foretaste of the great feast-day, which will last throughout eternity.

---

## Correspondence.

### DISTRICT OVERSIGHT MEETINGS.

I NOW write specially because of a note in the *Witness* of a coming article by you on "District" Oversight Meetings, because I share the anxiety with you that we should all speak the same thing in regard to this as in other matters.

We have for years held Quarterly United Oversight Meetings in —, changing round to the different meeting rooms, and have found these meetings most

helpful. They have drawn us closer together, and done much to help us to deal with difficulties, &c., in a similar manner in the various gatherings. The routine of meetings has been somewhat as follows:—

*First*, We are *exceedingly strict* in fixing and maintaining a basis of never allowing names of persons or places to be mentioned in questions, nor in allowing anything to be treated judicially; and we never waver in this course. Each circular bears words indicating this, the words varying according to the expression of the brethren drawing it up, as the circular is issued by the Overseeing Brethren at the place where the next meeting is to be held.

*Second*, I have been present at nearly every one, and have never heard the details of any other meeting discussed or even introduced, and yet questions of a useful character are dealt with in such a manner as would scarcely be possible at a more general or mixed meeting.

*Third*, While there is no judicial force used, the distinct tendency is to do away with marked differences of practice in the several assemblies, and thus prevent young (or any) saints from observing such differences as they move from one assembly to another; and it prevents that old statement, "Oh, we do so and so at our meeting," in contrast with others. It has the tendency to *minimise* this, and *has* done so, while a better feeling exists and increases towards the various Overseeing Brethren, and, of course, to *all* saints, as a grand result.

Our circulars go to all meetings within an hour's ride or so, and some to distant places—in fact, almost anywhere else where they happen to drop; but, of course, always to assemblies *near* to us as a matter of love. All who come we are glad to see, but we do not extend the *holding* of the meetings outside —, as it would be inconvenient.

While we are glad to see any who come, none are taken to task for not coming, *i.e.*, beyond the chiding of love.

At least one esteemed brother has several times written in a questioning manner when circulars have reached him; but I think his alarm is subsiding, as I have plainly placed our position before him, and told him that I believed the meetings some of us are now *fearing*, called "District" Oversight Meetings, have been *called into existence because* such meetings as ours were not only not known in many places, but would have been ignored and blown upon by many because of an unwholesome fear and dread of result. Such a fear, carried home to its right issue, would prevent saints from ever meeting at all least they did not agree. Thus the extreme we all now witness and lament and dread, I unhesitatingly tell our beloved brethren and others, has been produced by the *absence of any attempt* to do that which is really conducive to health and love and oneness of expression. We ought to be able so to meet, and we *can* so meet—not to interfere and judge one another, nor to meddle with the individual work of particular meetings, but to help to an outward expression in *practice* of the oneness which is such a mighty fact over and above our power to interfere with.

The remedy is then *not* to run down such attempts as God has enabled Overseeing Brethren to

maintain and profit by, but to *show the difference* between the one and the other.

The truth, as *usual*, is between making *no attempt* and the autocratic thing we lament to-day.—*Extract from a letter.*

#### CONSIDERING ONE ANOTHER.

It has been much on my mind lately to draw attention to the want of courtesy shown to Christians in our meetings, especially younger sisters. By writing this, I believe I only speak the thoughts of others.

I have a long way to come to the meeting, and a great deal to do before getting out, that it is not an unusual thing for me to be a little late. Our meeting is not a large one, so that there is room enough for all, yet there is never a seat to be had without walking right up to the front, a thing sisters feel to do. The back seats are generally packed, while those round the table are nearly, if not quite, empty. What I feel most is that so many brethren, seeing a sister come in, can sit and look at her embarrassment and never move to offer her a seat. I do not wonder at *mothers and servants* sitting near the back, as these have often to leave before the close, but few brethren need to do so. I trust these few lines may be the means of stirring some up to consider others. F. C.

[The lack of consideration for others in many assemblies is truly deplorable, and we sincerely trust the consciences of many may be exercised by the foregoing note.—ED.]

### Questions and Answers.

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

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:—

Does Deut. xxiii. 19, 20 forbid a brother in the Lord, in this dispensation, taking usury from another brother?

RECONCILIATION.—Is the reconciliation spoken of in Hebrews ii. 17 a present work of our Lord Jesus Christ as Priest, or was it effected at the cross.

THE FAITHFUL REMNANT.—Is it right for those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart to view themselves as forming the faithful remnant of their day?

HALF-FILLED HALLS.—How are we to get the people to come into the hall for preaching the Gospel? We are failing to get them to come in, though we do go out to invite them in.

THE LORD'S-DAY.—How may we lawfully view the obligations of the Sabbath-day, as transferred to it? Would it not be of much benefit to the church if the whole question as to the obligations of the Lord's-day were fully entertained from the Word?

SALVATION AND SECURITY.—Is salvation on condition of our faithfulness, or can we be lost after having been born again from above?

#### ONE BELIEVER BREAKING BREAD.

QUESTION 364.—When one believer is far from a gathering ought he alone to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread?

Ans.—The question as to whether a believer may, if alone, remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, opens up the question as to whether it is an individual or collective expression of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. We get "extreme unction" administered to the dying, and the "sacrament" similarly given to those not expected to live. We have also the liability for self-will on the part of any who desire to do as they like, and take "the communion" with any they choose to call together. Does not a careful examination of the object of both the Passover and the Lord's Supper lead us to see that they are both collective, and not individual expressions of faith, and should only be observed collectively *in due order*? A. O. M.

Editor's Note.—The foregoing reply, we believe, gives the truth upon this subject. We know of no observance of "the Supper" apart from the "Ecclesia" fellowship. An individual cannot constitute an "Ecclesia" or church. The Lord Himself has granted the highest dignity to the smallest possible number when He pledges His presence where two or three are gathered together unto His Name. It is for the individual to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, as in John vi. 53-57. This he may do at all times and under all circumstances. But to "show the Lord's death" in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is another thing. To remember the Lord is the privilege of the individual at all times. But to "do this for a memorial" of Him is another matter, and involves the question of communion. For one person alone to go through the form of breaking the bread and drinking the cup savours strongly of sacramentalism.

#### OMISSION OF THE TRIBE OF DAN.

QUESTION 365.—Why is the tribe of Dan not mentioned in the list—Rev. vii.?

Ans. A.—Is not the explanation of this omission in the last book of the Word of God to be found in the record of the first book, viz., Genesis xlix. 17, 18, where Jacob, telling his sons "that which shall befall them in the last days," says, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Then he says, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." There is little doubt that Dan here represents the Antichrist, the false Messiah, who "shall come in his own name," energised by the dragon, that old serpent, the devil, and that the ejaculation of the aged and dying patriarch is prophetically the expression of the remnant or sealed ones of Israel when suffering under the Antichrist. Compare Ps. xxxviii. 19-22; liii. 1-6; Isaiah xxv. 9. If this be so, and (as some have suggested) the Wilful King shall be of the tribe of Dan, it is not difficult to understand its being omitted from the sealed ones in Rev. vii. G. A. S.

Ans. B.—Simeon is omitted in Deut. xxxiii. from amongst the tribes blessed by Moses, and Dan is omitted from the

list in Rev. vii., yet in each case the number twelve is complete. The unity of *Israel*—expressed by the twelve tribes—seems the point kept in view always.

A. O. M.

### THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

**QUESTION 366.**—Do the words, “this day”, in Ps. ii. 7, and quoted in Acts xiii. 33 and Heb. i. 5, refer to the incarnation or resurrection of Christ? and, if it be either, how are the verses to be reconciled with the eternal Sonship of Christ?

**Ans. A.**—Having regard to the context it is evident that Acts xiii. 33, with quotation from Ps. ii. 7, points to the birth of Christ as the fulfilment of the promise made by God unto the fathers (the word “again,” as in the Authorised Version, should not be there), verse 34 points to the resurrection as the pledge of God’s faithfulness in accordance with other prophetic utterances, notwithstanding the sin of the nation in having rejected their Messiah. The essential Deity of the Son, His eternal co-existence with the Father as a distinct personality, is not in anywise affected by the incarnation. He whom God sent into the world was the only begotten Son. And previous to the birth of Jesus the angel thus announced to Mary, “That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Repeatedly from heaven that testimony was borne to Him, as the humbled Man trod the path of obedience to the cross, and by the resurrection out from the dead He was declared to be the Son of God with power. This faith owns and exultingly exclaims, in the language of inspiration, “Jesus, my Lord, from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.”

R. S.

**Ans. B.**—The whole context makes it abundantly evident that the “raising up” here is the “raising up from amongst the dead ones.” “God raised Him from the dead” (verse 30). “He raised Him from the dead, now no more to return to corruption” (verse 34). “But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption” (verse 37). In Romans i. 4 we read, “Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from amongst the dead ones.” The 2nd Psalm makes it very clear. In verses 6 and 7 we read, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.” It is in connection with the Son’s *resurrection* and ascension into heaven that Jehovah says, “Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen,” &c. (verse 8). It could not have been at His birth into this world that this was said to Him. “The holy and sure mercies of David” (Acts xiii. 34), of which we read in 2 Samuel vii., Psalm lxxxix., and other scriptures, were all in connection with the Lord’s *resurrection*, because the promises of the Kingdom to David and to “great David’s greater Son” were to be “for ever,” and this could *only* be in resurrection. “The sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them” (1 Peter i. 11, R.V.). See also Rev. i. 5, “The first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth” (the *second* depending upon the *first*). The sacrifice of Isaac was a type of the Lord’s sacrifice. “He that had received the promises offered

up his only begotten son . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. xi. 17-19). It may be said that Isaac was Abraham’s “only begotten from amongst the dead ones.” As to this touching the question of the eternal Sonship, surely it *does not*. He was *ever* the only begotten Son. “Unto the Son He saith, ‘Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.’” Surely *here* He is God the Son. The eternal God was, from the countless ages of eternity, Father, Son, Spirit. The Lord Jesus was the eternal Son (Heb. i. 8). He is the only begotten Son (Rom. i. 4). He **WILL BE** the subject Son. “Then shall the Son also be subject,” &c. (1 Cor. xv. 28), because of the love He *has* borne, *is* bearing, and *ever will* bear to His own bride given Him by the Father (see Exodus xxi. 5, 6).

L. C.

**Ans. C.**—The manifestation of Christ *in resurrection*—as the eternal Son of God—is the point in Acts xiii. 33, Heb. i. 5, and Ps. ii. 7. “*The Word . . . was in the beginning with God.*” “*The Word of Life . . . was manifested*”—firstly, as incarnate, when “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem.” And more fully when “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.” The words, “begotten thee,” refer to the *manifestation* of the Blessed One as the chosen of God, and not to the creative power of God. The eternity of the *Son* of God is as incomprehensible as the eternity of God, but faith believes both.

A. O. M.

**Editor’s Note.**—We only add to the foregoing the remarks of Alford:—

“The term ‘raised up’ is ambiguous: but here the meaning ‘from the dead’ is absolutely required by the context; both because the word is repeated with that addition (verse 34), and because the apostle’s emphasis throughout the passage is on the *resurrection* (verse 30) as the final fulfilment of God’s promises regarding Jesus. Paul refers the prophecy (Ps. ii.) in its full completion to the resurrection of our Lord: similarly in Rom. i. 4, ‘declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead.’”

### THE RIGHTEOUS, THE SINNER, AND THE UNGODLY.—1 Peter iv. 18.

(Late answer to Question 356, from New Zealand.)

**Ans.**—Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. The terms, Sinner and Ungodly, are never once applied to those who have been “born again.” In the epistles by Paul to different churches the Spirit of God never uses such a term in salutation, although there were in Corinth some living in sin, and also other evils. The application of the verse referred to shows, that if it were possible for a righteous one, that is, one made so through Christ (Rom. 5. 19), to be scarcely saved (so as by fire), such as Lot out of Sodom, who is spoken of as a righteous man, then what a doom for the sinner and ungodly—synonymous terms (Rom. v. 6, 8). Such teaching as that mentioned is a terrible perversion of God’s precious word, and, if not abandoned, will lead to disastrous results. G. J. M.



## The EXCELLENCY of the KNOWLEDGE of CHRIST JESUS, MY LORD.

CHRISTIANITY is having to do with a Person. Thousands of people clothe themselves with the religion of Christianity, who have never accepted the Christ of Christianity. And, alas! many more, who have accepted Jesus as their Saviour, know little of Him as the object of their hearts—know little of the power of His love and the attractiveness of His beauty; which things work as mighty forces to practical Christianity, producing the graces and virtues of that Blessed One in a poor, weak creature down here on the earth where He is rejected.

Yes, Christianity is having to do with a Person, not with a code of laws and ordinances. Hence the affections of the heart are brought into operation, and nothing but what flows from *such* springs is acceptable to God. Rigid rules and legal efforts can never make up for the absence of such motive power. How important, then, is the knowledge of Christ for Christian life and testimony here, as well as for eternal happiness in heaven. O then, let the cry of our hearts be, "O to know Him, and the power of His resurrection." Let our desire be to enjoy His company in whatever sphere we move.

Lord, when in daily duties,  
Surrounded though I be  
With Godless, Christless people,  
Then keep my heart with Thee.

Or if, among Thy people,  
My blessed call may be  
To tell Thy love unbounded,  
My heart would be with Thee.

And oh! when sorrow presses,  
And nought around I see  
But waves and billows foaming,  
Lord keep my heart with Thee.

And as He becomes better known to our hearts, our desire to make Him known to others deepens. We need, in these days of coldness and half-heartedness, to find out by our ministry the very springs of Divine life in the soul, and stir up the affections thereof; and no merely theological exposition, or discourse on ecclesiastical precision can do this, however important these may be in their place.

For Paul, Christianity was "the excellency

of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord," to "be found in Him," to "know Him and the power of His resurrection," and to make Him known to others. O what a power there is in a man's life when Christ Himself is the great object of his heart, subject of his knowledge, and theme of his ministry. He does not stop to quibble about questions to no profit, but seeks to put a more noble object before those who raise them; though he will earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. He will not become the servant of a party, nor will he adopt any one of the petty causes of men; but he will earnestly seek the interests of the great cause of Christ, to make known the savour of His knowledge and stand firm for His truth. He will not stand committed to the crotchets and prejudices of his brethren; though he will treat them all with the most tender consideration, and with as much deference as is possible without compromising his position as the Lord's servant. He will not be a slave to the applause of men, nor will he fear their censure; though he will desire and seek the fellowship of his brethren. He is firm in his convictions before God, and most tenacious of the truth known to him; yet he will be most yielding where he is not quite clear in his apprehension of the truth, or where he himself or his own personal affairs only are in question. He will listen most patiently to those who have opposite views to himself on any subject, and seek most graciously to correct or adjust those views by the one standard of truth, and subject, in a fair way, his own views to the same standard. Though fearless in his proclamation of what he knows to be the truth, yet he will be most fearful of stumbling one of the little ones that believe in Jesus. Such is the man whose life, character, and conduct are moulded and governed by habitual communion with Christ Jesus the Lord. Is there not great need for such men of God at the present time? Where are they?

For most people, Christianity consists in nothing more than outward observances of some kind or other; nor do I refer here exclusively to ritualists, for at best it is, for us, so naturally identified with the abstract statement of certain doctrines and ecclesiastical associations that we are in continual danger

of losing sight of the really personal basis on which it rests, and personal attraction and communion by which it works. Real vital and practical Christianity is not acquaintance with dry theology, nor devotedness to any particular religious association or church membership, however right these may be in themselves, but acquaintance with a living Person, who once was dead—"the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." Christianity finds its origin in the inherent virtue and power of the Person and death of Christ; and it derives its true character from contact with Christ by faith, rejected here and exalted in heaven. Its sublime doctrines set forth Christ, maintaining the dignity of His Person, the efficacy of His work, and the blessing of those who believe on Him in the heart and confess Him with the mouth, as well as making known the doom of those who reject Him or neglect the salvation offered in His name.

If Christ, therefore, is not known to me as my own personal Saviour, I am not capable of understanding the doctrines of Christianity. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Indeed, even though I know Him as my Saviour, I must have a real and *present* interest in Himself, and personal attachment to Himself, before I can apprehend and realise with any measure of distinctness, the things concerning Himself. Then those things become dear to me because concerning One I love.

When Christ is precious and present to the heart, His doctrine will surely be precious also; and error will be quickly detected and decidedly rejected. May we never separate between the truth and Christ. And may we see Christ in every part of the truth, in whatever way He may be presented therein—whether in type or antitype, in ecclesiastical, evangelical, doctrinal, or preceptive portions—so that we may not be found wrenching one truth from its relative connection with another. It cannot be right to use one part of the truth to weaken the force of another part. There is not a greater cause of needless strife and division, among the people of God at the present time, than this giving one part of the truth undue prominence above another. Some handle one subject of Scripture in this way,

and some another, and begin to form conflicting parties accordingly. One party are sure that they are right in what they hold, and can appeal to Scripture in support of it; and in itself it is truth, but in their hands it is so wrenched from its relative connection with the part of truth held by another party as to render this latter null. The party inclined toward the particular truth, or truths, thus nullified, begin to stand up for it with all their might, thinking themselves quite valiant for the truth, while they ignore, if not deny, the part of truth held by those whom they oppose, simply because in the hands of its advocates it wears the appearance of error, more on account of what it is made to deny than what it is made to teach. Some make everything of individual responsibility to the Lord (which, albeit, is very important in such days of division as these are), but ignore ecclesiastical position; others exalt the latter above, and at the expense of, the former. I need not multiply instances. Alas! we have only to look around and amongst us to see the truth of what is here stated. Love and light go together; truth, righteousness, and grace all stand in intimate relationship to each other; and if either the one or the other be severed from its relative connection, the greatest possible mischief is the result. In one case, the Scripture is made to sanction—or, at least, to tolerate—the most positive error; while in the other case, it is made to hinder, stumble, and divide the sheep of Christ, and at the same time foster a Pharisaical spirit in those who carry on this wretched work. All this, and much more, evil arises from dividing asunder what God has joined together. I believe in either case such one-sidedness arises from an undue estimate of one's own knowledge, while undervaluing that of others (two things which always go together), instead of seeking to benefit by it. Mutual help among saints is of God, and I cannot dispense with it without loss to my own soul. And it may even arise from a desire to know the truth in theory, without an equal desire to know more about Christ Himself, the subject of it. We cannot learn, hold, or teach the truth correctly unless Christ has His place in our hearts. And if He Himself is before my soul, I shall not lack interest in His word,

work, or people. "When they were alone, He expounded unto them all these things." Yes, it is in His presence, with Himself, we learn the truth effectually, when the heart and conscience are in lively exercise as well as the mind.

On account of the weakness and littleness of our poor minds, at best, it is a difficult thing to maintain a correct balance of truth. And when, in addition to this, we remember the sectarianism and prejudice to which we are all prone, we need indeed to guard against that conceit which treats what little we know of the truth as if it were all that is to be known, and so judges everything else accordingly. At the same time, it is of the very last importance that what I take in and retain as the truth *is* such, and then hold it fast, and reject all that is *really* opposed to it—that would deny it. The importance of this cannot be over-estimated. Though a newly-born soul only has the truth of free pardon, justification by faith, and salvation through the death of Christ, yet he is bound to reject, in the most peremptory way, anything that would positively deny this; yet he must hold his mind open for such aspects of the truth as, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and justification by works, as taught by James; parts of the truth which at first may be very perplexing to him, and which prejudice may lead him to reject—indeed such has been the case sometimes with most good and earnest men. And yet, when understood, it is seen that, so far from affecting in the slightest degree the absolute character of the salvation of the soul as presented in the Gospel, they confirm it, give evidence of its possession in the soul, and a larger view of salvation altogether. And such is the case with other parts of the truth.

It is most humiliating to find how conceit and selfishness enter into all we do. We look at everything around in relation to ourselves, according to our own view of things, and as our petty reputations are affected thereby. We each have our own little store of ideas, our own religious sphere, all moulded by our own minds. With one it may be more especially in connection with the Lord's work, with another church position, and so on. And for either the one or the other, Christianity so

naturally connects itself with his own ideas with his own sphere, that he begins to judge everything else as wrong. Our readiness to pass judgment upon ways not our own is an easy way of feeding our pride.

It is most desirable that there should be less of this among the saints of God, and a greater disposition to profit by each other's grace and knowledge. But I am convinced that the only remedy is a more intimate acquaintance with the blessed Lord Himself. "That I might know Him!" O let this, above all else, be the knowledge we desire and seek; for how little we know of Jesus, after all! How very different from the state of things we have been speaking of, when He Himself is before our eyes, when our hearts are detained in His presence and satisfied with His love. Then we begin to look at things around in relation to Him, and as His glory is affected thereby; and this makes all the difference in our judgment, attitude, and action among the people of God, and before the world. There will be a savour of Christ in all we do, and our speech will be always in grace, seasoned with salt; faithfulness and graciousness will combine in all our ways with our brethren. But, alas! where shall we look for this? For myself, I never so felt how I come short as at the present time; but I can say too, more really than ever I did, "O for 'the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.'"

Let us neither reduce Christianity to an ecclesiastical clique or party, nor degrade it to the level of the world, but connect it with an earth-rejected and heaven-accepted Christ. May it be, for us, nothing short of Himself. Himself the object of our heart's individually—Himself our ecclesiastical centre—Himself the theme of our ministry and conversation. Yes! may the exaltation of His name before men, the maintenance of His truth and honour in the Church, be the great business of our lives here on the earth where He is rejected.

The fact that such trivial, and, in some instances, silly, questions are matters for such strife and division among saints is a proof of coldness of heart towards Christ and towards each other. How very watchful we need to be against these little disputes—things that are little in themselves, but enough, in the

hands of the enemy, to hinder all united effort in the greater and more noble interests of Christ; yea, even to scatter and divide the sheep of Christ. What silly creatures we are! How we play into the enemy's hands! Surely he has succeeded in corrupting our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ.

May the blessed Lord draw the hearts of His people away from our own petty causes to Himself, and enlarge them in His great and noble cause, and set our breasts aglow with affection towards each other, till He come to take us to Himself, to enjoy His love and presence without alloy. J. H. B.

## THE CARNAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN IN ABERDEEN BY  
J. R. CALDWELL.

Romans viii. 5-9.

**T**HE spiritual mind is the mind of Christ. The walk of Christ was a walk in the Spirit, the words of Christ were words in the Spirit, the comfort He gave was the comfort of the Spirit. The eighth of Romans says that the spiritual mind is "life and peace." "I am meek and lowly in heart." This is the only thing the Lord Jesus ever referred to as characteristic of His own heart. If we have not learned that at the feet of Jesus we have not yet learned the first lesson in spiritual life.

What we want is a keen contention for the lowest place.

If this contention for the lowest place is ours, our strife will be very harmless. God grant us to learn that the first lesson for us is lowly-mindedness.

Look at Eph. iv. and you will see how this is inculcated.

"Lowliness and meekness" constitute the first lesson in God's school. Knowledge is not spirituality. Gift is not spirituality. The power to preach is not spirituality. The spiritual mind begins with fellowship with Christ in His lowliness of heart.

If we have not begun there we have not yet learned our A B C, and all will be folly without it.

In the epistle to the Corinthians we read of two things, knowledge and love. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up."

I have heard persons decry knowledge, and

speak of it as a dangerous thing, and not to be sought after.

But the knowledge of the mind of God is given us in His Word. There we get His thoughts. Thereby we get rid of our carnal thoughts and get His spiritual thoughts. God does not want us to be empty-headed, but to have the evil cast out by His thoughts coming in, and by our hiding them in our hearts. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." That in itself is a power to keep us far off from the evil that is around us. Nevertheless there is a tendency in the mere fact of our acquiring knowledge to puff up. I may become a zealous propagator of certain truths of Scripture with an unbroken spirit and a proud heart, all the while gratifying the carnal mind. Truth is the expression of the mind of God. But God has a *heart* as well as a *mind*. Love is the outpouring of the heart of God, whilst truth is the revelation of the mind of God. In the blessed Lord Jesus, truth and love, knowledge and grace, were perfectly combined.

There was no excessive pushing of truth where grace and love would rather keep it back. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

"The Son of the Father in truth and in love." Thus, love continually balances truth.

It is not truth at the expense of love, nor love at the expense of truth. The mind of God and the heart of God came perfectly out in the life and walk of His blessed Son. To be spiritually-minded will be to manifest truth and love as He did: to be continually combining truth with love, and love with truth. If ever I find that the pressing of truth involves the violation of Divine love I must wait. Again, the love that sacrifices truth cannot be Divine love. "This is love, that we keep His commandments"; so that the two are perfectly balanced. I am assured that what God's children have to learn is the combination of truth with love and love with truth, and nothing short of that is spirituality.

We are much more apt to fail in love than in truth. As I have remarked, we may, with a proud, unbroken spirit, contend for truth.

How often have we, in a hard, censorious spirit, contended for what we believed to be truth. We have done it with a carnal mind.

We cannot do that with love. Love involves the denial of self. If we go in love to help a brother, or appear, in the presence of God, in intercession, praying for him, it will be like the prayer of the seventeenth of John. The Lord uttered this prayer just ere He stepped over the brook Cedron to the agony of Gethsemane, to the bar of the high priest, to the crown of thorns, the stripes, the cross; yet, this blessed Advocate never refers to His own sorrows; it is all for those on whose behalf He pleads. That is love.

O that we all had the spiritual mind, the mind of Christ, that we could forget self, and plead in behalf of erring ones, of self-willed ones, and backsliding ones. With this mind of Christ, how easily sores would be healed. It seems to me that the spiritual mind, being the mind of Christ, will ever be characterised by lowliness and love; yet, with lowliness and love, there will never be the surrender of one word God has written (1 Cor. xiv. 37).

There is a false thought of spirituality nowadays.

I have heard of meetings for the deepening of spiritual life, that is, for the increase of spirituality amongst God's people.

Spiritual life must run in the channel of God's Word, and in no other way. The spiritual mind will acknowledge the authority of the whole of God's Word.

We may pick out bits of God's Word and make it seem to say anything, but no error can stand the test of the whole of God's Word. This epistle (Corinthians) is the book of the Church.

It gives God's mind concerning ministry, etc. In it the apostle is putting down in black and white for the church for all time, till Jesus come, "the commandments of the Lord." Nearly all Christendom practically ignores this fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. A church after the principle of 1 Cor. xii. and xiv. : where is it to be found? Yet, the things written here are "the commandments of the Lord." The spiritual will acknowledge them practically, and seek to carry them out. True spirituality takes the Word of God as it is written, and seeks to obey it, owning no other authority. Obedience to Christ necessarily sets aside the traditions of men. The test will be, not is this in accordance with the

confession of faith, or any other humanly-devised standard, however excellent, but is this in accordance with the written Word of the Lord.

The spiritual mind will bring baptism, and how God's people ought to assemble, and the order of worship, and the character of ministry, all to the test of Scripture. This is one aspect of the spiritual mind—loyalty to the Word of God.

The spiritual mind comes to the written Word of God like a little child, and acknowledges that what is there is the commandments of the Lord. If we have the mind of Christ we will prove in our blessed experience that it is "life and peace."

To be carnally-minded is death.

For a child of God to be walking through this world, occupied only with the things of time and sense, buried in the world's business and pleasures, forgetting the coming of the Lord, just living as the world lives; is that life? Verily, no!

He is not living in a spiritual sense. It is only as we are happy, and filled with the peace of God, and manifesting the life of Christ, that we truly live. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." This does not mean that she is not a Christian. But living for pleasure, for self, for frivolity, for dress, that is not life; she is "dead while she liveth." The carnal mind is death. It may be that we have been walking away from the presence of the Lord, not enjoying Him in our business, in our homes, or yet breaking bread. Beloved friends, I believe that there are many children of God in this carnal state, and yet they are putting forth their hands to order the Church of God. Many a time it has been made manifest that this was the secret of the sorrow and trouble.

What is needed is the spiritual mind, which is life and peace.

It is no hard work then to tell a sinner about the love of God, no hard work then to edify saints, no hard work then to go and plead with God at the mercy seat.

Let us go right to the Lord and tell out all to Him if His Word has convicted and exposed us, tell Him that we are carnal. If the apostle had written to us would he not have said, "Ye are carnal," and, Walk as men, ye are but babes in Christ.

## SELECT SAYINGS FROM SEVERAL ADDRESSES TO BELIEVERS.\*

BY ROBERT C. CHAPMAN, OF BARNSTAPLE.

**THE HIGHEST SUCCESS.**—How precious Christ's faith, in Isaiah xlix. 4, "I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with Jehovah, and My work with My God." His highest aim and joy was to please the Father. If we do the like we shall always have the highest success, and whatever may seem like ill success in our endeavours to win others for Christ, let us not be cast down, though, for the present, we may not see them brought to Him. It is not lawful for us to be dejected. It is not lawful for a godly father and mother to be sad and dejected if, whilst they are asking God to lead their children to Christ, their prayers, for the present, are not answered. Though the blessed Lord wept over Jerusalem, yet He never gave place to unbelief; He never gave way to thoughts of dejection and discouragement as touching the success of His work. He knew that His first duty was to do God the Father's will, and He knew He would have His great recompense by-and-by; I mean His great recompense, as in this chapter we see Him looking on to the full, complete recompense in the New Creation. We ought also to be looking on to that time of recompense. I may be speaking to some who are pleading in faith and love at the Mercy-seat for unregenerate fathers and mothers, or others. Let us weep and mourn over them, but let us beware of anything like dejection. Let us say, "My work is with my God; my wages shall be better than my work."

**GAIN FROM TRIALS.**—"But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me" (Isaiah xlix. 14-16). What is the answer? "Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." Is there any one of us in any peculiar trial? I don't ask, is there one here who has no trial, because that would be very pitiable indeed. But there may be some here in peculiar trial; then, that is an occasion for you to trust in God's faithful-

ness. Don't be thinking first of deliverance out of the trial. It is not, how will God deal with me? but it should be, how shall I deal with God? Shall I say, "He hath forsaken me"? The answer to such unbelief is, "I have graven thee on the palms of My hands." O then, any thought of unbelief, how wrong! While you and I watch against the temptation to unbelief, depend upon it God will show how pleased He is, and we shall get great gain from our trials.

**PRIDE AND SELF-WILL.**—It is a remarkable thing in the epistle to the Philippians that in all its words of precept and exhortation there is no sin made mention of that the conscience of the unregenerate man condemns. But, in the epistle to the Ephesians, you will find plentiful mention of sins that the child of God is liable to fall into; reminding us, that if we are not upheld by the Lord Jesus, through His Spirit, there is not a sin that the natural man's conscience condemns, not a sin that is most vile and scandalous in the eyes of the world, but what we can fall into. Did you ever find the people of the world talking of the filthiness of pride? You may hear them talk of *honest pride*, but never of the filthiness of it. In this epistle self-exaltation is held forth as utterly abominable to God; and self-will, self-glory, and self-exaltation as being ruinous to the soul's fellowship with God, and ruinous to the Church of God, in the fellowship of its members, one with another.

**THE SINNER'S CONFESSION.**—The bar to the salvation of any sinner is in himself, not in God. Let the poor sinner account his own righteousness as dung and rags, he will receive Christ; God will not, He cannot shut out Christ from his heart. I am everywhere zealous to say that there is no need for a sinner crying to God for mercy, but there is need that the sinner should confess himself not entitled to a morsel of bread, nor a cup of cold water; and the moment he owns his unworthiness, he cannot reject what God gives—eternal life is the property of everyone that will have it.

**WORKING OUT SALVATION.**—When the apostle says, "Work out your own salvation" (Phil. ii. 12), what does it mean? It means, that by the indwelling Spirit we are day by day to work out our salvation from everything that is not like Christ. And if I would work it out,

\*"Addresses to Believers," by R. C. Chapman. Glasgow: The Witness Office. Paper cover, 3d.; Cloth cover, 6d. Post free. Now ready.

I must first of all have my pattern before me. Having received Christ crucified as my peace, life, righteousness, and strength, let me receive Him as my perfect example. Now, as the Gospel of Christ excels and surpasses all possible thoughts of the natural man concerning God, so in this point, you never can imagine a natural man setting before him Christ's example of self-abasement before God as the pattern by which he is to walk. The business of every child of Adam is self-exaltation, not always as betwixt himself and his neighbour, but as betwixt himself and God. The life that every child of Adam lives is one of self-will; therefore, of self-exaltation against God.

CLEANSED, ADORNED, AND CROWNED.—None but the child of God ever will, or can, abase himself before God; he knows God, and he knows himself, as the natural man does not, and cannot know himself. Well then, if I discern my place, what is it? A poor dung-hill beggar; I take it. A dung-hill beggar, whom God in His grace has laid hands upon, cleansed, adorned, and crowned—I am a child of God, and I am a royal priest—I speak, of course, in the person of every believer. Now then, we are no longer called to take our place as dung-hill beggars, but as in Christ Jesus, raised even higher than the angels of God. How, then, shall I behave myself? I shall be working out my salvation from day to day—that is my salvation from the indwelling Holy Spirit—from any and every thing that is not like Christ; and, in myself, I shall be in a state of self-abasement before God continually. Just suppose that, throughout the family of God, this were made the heart's business of every child of God; then we should be walking in the Spirit's fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, and with each other; each contending for the lowest place, each esteeming the other better than himself; that is to say, I should know so much more of myself, as touching the flesh, than I could do of anyone else, that I would always say, "the lowest place belongs to me." Then all strife and contention amongst the children of God would die out.

A COMING HIGH PRIEST.—When the high priest went into the holiest do you think that the people, who were standing without when he disappeared from their view, were

disappointed and went to their tents? O no. They waited till he came out again. The sun did not set before he reappeared; it was all done in one day. That is a precious hint to us. As the people waited for the reappearing of Aaron when he entered within the veil, they didn't say, "What a long time he keeps us waiting." It was in human reckoning a little while between the time that he went in and came out. If we dwell in conscience within the veil we shall learn to reckon time in the Spirit's fellowship with Christ Himself. Do you remember His promise three times given in Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20, "Behold, I come quickly"; and he answers, "Surely," to the last utterance of the promise. Let us reckon with Him when He says, "I come quickly."

THE RIGHT STANDARD.—We gather from these words of the apostle Paul that the great mark of the perfect man is, that he is richly acquainted with his imperfection. If that mark be not found in a child of God he has scarce begun to seek after perfection; he has not the right standard before him; he does not know himself. Then the apostle says, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded" (Phil. iii. 15).

"ANXIOUS CARES."—What a blessed state for a child of God to be in, "Careful for nothing" (Phil. iv. 6); that is, having no anxious unbelieving care for anything. How do I come at this state? By minding the exhortation of the apostle in the *second chapter*, and following his example in the *third chapter*. If I am aiming at conformity with Christ, I will see things rightly with God's eye; I shall judge their value with heavenly wisdom; and I should find occasion in the smallest matters of daily life for pursuing the great business of conformity with Christ. Let the child of God go out of his closet into his family, having before him resemblance and conformity to Christ, he will meet, before he crosses the threshold to go out into his daily business, something to test him and to give occasion for him to manifest the spirit of Christ. If he is aiming at conformity with Christ, he may be sorrowful, but he will not be angry; he may be sad, but he will not be vexed. He will not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and he will be witnessing for Christ to all around him; his aim being to magnify Christ.

Elementary Articles, No. 9.

## HOLDING ON ;

or,

### Final Perseverance and Eternal Security.

"When he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. xiv. 30, 31.)

WE firmly maintain the need of every believer, young or old, to hold on to Christ ; yea, to hold on with a life-long and death grip. But we want also to tell you that God and Christ have gripped you and hold you in *their* hands. There is the "holding on" of the believer, and there is the "holding on" of the Saviour ; the former is necessary for your practical progress, growth in grace, and constant communion with God ; the latter secures your present and final security. *Our* grasp helps to make one continually happy and peaceful. *His* grasp is the strength of our present and eternal safety.

"The final perseverance of the saints" for their daily walk and moral conformity to Christ, cannot be too strongly pressed. All weakness and failure amongst God's children are the simple result of not habitually cleaving to Christ. Were we constantly walking by His side, learning at His feet, and ever consciously abiding in His presence, we would not, could not stumble and fall. Blessed be His name, however ! His priestly service with God succours and sustains amid scenes of trial and temptation (Heb. ii. 18 ; iv. 15) ; while His intercession with the Father restores the failing, erring child (1 John ii. 1).

Now, if heaven depended on our "holding on," or "final perseverance," think you one redeemed soul would ever enter the mansions of glory?—ever stand within yonder jasper walls? *Never, no NEVER!* We are not surprised that many Wesleyan and other friends, true believers on Jesus, are yet without the conscious enjoyment of settled peace with God. How can they be uninterruptedly happy in the thought that after all Christ has done, and after all *their* holding on, they may finally be lost—instead of heaven, hell, and instead of the song of the ransomed, they may have to join in the eternal wail of the damned in the lake

of fire ! Satan is a perfect adept in ruining the happiness of souls, by confusing and mystifying the truths of *communion* and *safety*. The former, we repeat, is largely dependent upon ourselves ; while the latter is founded solely on what God has done for us.

Did the sinking Peter secure his safety by "holding on" ? No, the Lord stretched forth His hand and caught the self-confident apostle. What perished in the Galilean sea was the doctrine of the final perseverance of the believer to make good his own safety. Why, Peter did not even grasp the outstretched hand of Jesus. That hand of infinite love and of omnipotent power—soon to be nailed to the cross—caught him, and held him, and saved him. Did Peter hold on to the Lord ? or did the Lord hold Peter ? The latter surely. Our "holding on," however important and vital in other connections, is never in God's Word the ground of our final security. Eternal life is God's gift to us (Rom. vi. 23) ; for security it is deposited in the Son (1 John v. 11) ; and we are set in direct connection with the source itself (verse 12, Rev. xxi. 6), so the stream in us can never fail ; nor will the gift ever be withdrawn, for the gifts of God are without recall (Rom. xi. 29). As sheep we are borne rejoicingly on the shoulders of the Shepherd (Luke xv. 5). We are not saved by our "holding on" ; for *as* sheep we have no hands to hold on by. It was the Shepherd which found the sheep. "*He layeth* it on His shoulders." The struggles of the sheep were not to *keep on*, but to *get off*. *All* the Lord's sheep are borne on His shoulders ; all are equally safe. It is the final perseverance of the Shepherd to carry the lambs in His *bosom*, and the sheep on His *shoulders*—love and strength ; nor does He grudge the pains we cost Him. He will not lay us down half-way, no, not till "home, sweet home" is reached (verse 6). Our eternal safety is the Shepherd's sole responsibility and not that of the sheep at all. What mighty shoulders He has ! How resistless the love which seeks, saves, preserves, and finally presents us to Himself spotless and in glory !

In John v. 24, we have a threefold cord which no one in earth or hell can break. The eternal security of every believer is guaranteed by the Lord Himself. It is an eternal life



policy. (1) "Hath everlasting life." (2) "Shall not come into condemnation," or judgment. (3) "Is passed from death unto life." We have also in chap. x. of the same gospel, one of the most comprehensive statements on this subject found within the covers of the Bible. "I give unto them eternal life." "And they shall never perish." Hug this sentence to your heart, poor trembling believer! What a gift freely and sovereignly bestowed! It is worth its weight in gold. He who declares the sheep shall never perish, knows well their ways and character, their continual proneness to wander and flee on the slightest approach of danger. Just like Peter, who declared he would face prison and death for Christ, and yet was frightened at the voice of a servant-maid, and denied his Master with oaths and cursings. Peter completely broke down, but his faith failed not (compare Luke xxii., verses 31-34, with verses 54-62). It is so with every one of us. In the darkest season, in the moment even of fiercest temptation, in the weakest hour the faith of the believer ever clings to Christ, even while the lips, it may be, cruelly deny Him. A believer, a true saint, may, alas, go down into terrible depths of evil, and wreck thereby his happiness and usefulness; but there is just one thing he cannot do, he cannot absolutely give up Christ. Judas was an *apostate*, and so never had the root of the matter in him. He gave up Christ absolutely. Peter was a *backslider*, and one for whom the Lord prayed. He denied the Lord, but never gave Him up. Judas hanged himself in despair. Peter wept bitter tears of repentance. But, proceeds our blessed Lord, "neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." Ah! how safe the sheep are! No enemy can reach them *there*. It is not the good sheep alone which are held in the secure hand of the Omnipotent Saviour; nor is our place in His hand conditional on our state or ways. "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all." We are the Father's gift to the Son. But will the Father hold us, and preserve us, and yet present us to His Son? He shall. He can do it, for He is "greater than all"—greater than the greatest enemy, and greater than our poor hearts. "And no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." We are in the hand of the *Son* (verse

28), and in the hand of the *Father* (verse 29). How ample the security here afforded!

Now comes the climax to this marvellous disclosure of our present and eternal safety, "I and My Father are one" (verse 30). One in purpose to keep and maintain the blood-bought sheep, *because* the Father and the Son are "one" in *Divine nature*. The Shepherd says of the sheep, "*I know them*"; our weaknesses, our temptations, are ever before Him. He comprehends all perfectly, and yet in His absolute knowledge of each one of us, He says, "they shall never perish." While in His hand and in the Father's too, no external, hostile power can reach us. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Further, your relationship to God as His child is a *fact*. It can never be undone. It can never cease to be. If born of God (John i. 13), you are necessarily His child for ever. Your conduct, be it good or bad, cannot, in the very nature of things, weaken or destroy the relationship which is eternal. Naughty ways and unbecoming conduct will most certainly affect the communion and joy of such a high and holy relationship, and for this the advocacy of Christ with the Father is provided; *not* to restore the relationship which was never broken; not to effect the new birth a second time, but to restore the *feeling* and *communion* due to the unchangeable fact, once God's child and that for ever. The new birth is a fixed act, never repeated. We have said, you can never cease to be God's own child. Is it not therefore a monstrous thought, and one abhorrent to every right feeling, even of a natural kind, that a child of God should ultimately find himself in the lake of fire—an eternally lost soul! We utterly reject and loathe the unhallowed doctrine of "falling away" so as to be finally lost.

Fear not, dear weak believer, God's own hand shut Noah and his family in the ark (Gen vii. 16), which was made judgment-proof (vi. 14). God himself secured the door, and so none could *enter* and none could *leave*. There was no getting out of the ark and no desire to do so either, for "the Lord shut him in." Noah was to enjoy communion with God and Heaven in the third storey of the ark, where the window was situated (vi. 16; viii. 6). God secured the door so that none could get

*in* and none get out. Instead of Noah going down to the "lower" flat and grumbling at the door to get out, as so many believers do, we learn that he occupied himself with the window. Is the application to us difficult to read? Are we not quickened, raised, and seated in heavenly places in Him? (Eph. ii. 5, 6). Have we not reached the third storey? The hand of God set us there, and *there* we are seated independent of our ways. Will He who is rich in mercy and great in love pluck us from those wondrous heights of glory and blessing? For none other can. *Never!* Surely the ark, while distinctly *typical* of the yet future Jewish remnant preserved through the great tribulation (Luke xvii. 27), is great and minute in *illustrative* truths to us!

Beloved reader, rest your soul in unshaken confidence on the bare and unperishable Word of God. Give to the winds your fears. God has pledged Himself in word and oath to secure your blessing, and has moreover cast your soul's anchor within the veil where alone stands the Ark of God; to *that* the anchor is securely fastened. Your bark may be tossed on boisterous and stormy seas; but fear not, you will ride out every storm. The anchor cannot drag, nor can the Divine chain which connects the ship and anchor ever break. All, all is solid and enduring as the throne of the eternal! (Heb. vi. 17-20). You cannot be more safe in the glory than you are now. You are as completely beyond judgment in this world as Christ now is at God's right hand: "Because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). As a believer on Christ, you are already "justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). You *have* peace with God (Rom. v. 1) and a Divine forgiveness and forgetfulness of all your sins (1 John ii. 12; Heb. x. 17). God has cast all your sins into the *depths* of the sea, where *you* cannot find them (Micah vii. 19), and cast them behind His *back*, where *He* cannot see them (Isa. xxxviii. 17); while in grace He sets you, the pardoned rebel, before His face for ever (Ps. xli. 12). Thus God Himself stands between you and your sins, having cast *them* behind His back and set *you* before His face!

W. SCOTT.

Issued as a little book at 6d. per doz.

## GOD'S CHURCH and GOD'S CHURCHES.

AN ADDRESS BY HENRY DYER.\*

**A**NOTHER point. The Lord speaks of an angel for each of the churches, and He never leaves a church without one. But what are we to understand by the "angel"? In the Book of the Revelation many things are taught us by names they do not bear elsewhere in Scripture. Thus, we have the Holy Ghost spoken of as "the seven spirits"; a title nowhere else given to Him. So here, the whole ministry of the Word in any local assembly is called its "angel"; a word of double meaning, viz., first, those spiritual and heavenly beings, the ministers of God's will; and, secondly, the simple meaning of "messenger," one who carries a message. Thus, all in Ephesus who brought the Lord's message to the church there, were, collectively, the Lord's "angel" for Ephesus, or for Smyrna, or for Pergamos, &c. Thus, also, Haggai is called "the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message," the Lord Himself being present (see Haggai i. 13). And so here, the Lord Himself being seen in the midst of His lampstands, all who speak in His Name are called His "messengers"—His "angels." Therefore we learn that the Lord never leaves a local church without some power of Divine ministry. If it be only ten or twenty, He will enable some brother to speak a word which shall be in power; whilst there may be another of twenty-five, ten or twenty miles away, and the Lord is equally in the midst of them, and is as sufficient for the church of ten as for the church of twenty-five, and will convey His message to each in each spot. And no need is there always to fetch some one to come and minister. Shall we not wait on God, and will He not raise up some amongst us? For is He not in the midst of the churches, and holds the whole of the stars, *i.e.*, "the angels," in His hand? And that, too, when it is but two or three who are gathered together to His Name in this or that place. It will not be "churches" for long, for there is only one Church in the coming glory; but I love to think that, whilst there is a plurality of churches, He walks with burning yet loving feet in the midst of them all.

LOVE all for Jesus, but Jesus for Himself.

\* Issued as a small Penny Book.

This qualifying of each church by the presence in it of the Lord Himself for its own matters, takes the two lines of edification and discipline. And every loving labourer has to take these two lines, just as every loving father of a family, whilst he feeds and instructs and teaches, also uses the rod for correction if it is needed. Thus, as respects edification, Paul says to the church at Rome, chap. xv. 14 (and apparently it was a church small in number): "I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." And yet he writes them an epistle of sixteen chapters. Not because they could not do without him. Nay, they had the Lord; and if the apostles die or "go a-fishing," the Lord would not die nor forget them. And, as to discipline, turn to Corinth. Does Paul say to them, You can't put away that incestuous person unless I come and help you? Not a bit; but you gather yourselves together, and, in the Name of the Lord Jesus (and my spirit with you), put away from among yourselves that wicked person. Thus Jesus Himself is near to all His churches. O sweet truth! There is not a corner of all God's spiritual Israel which is not equally near to the Lord. The tabernacle was not in a corner of the camp, and nearest to this tribe or to that; but it was in the midst of all the twelve, and not one tribe could claim to know the way they were to go more than the others, for all could see the guiding cloud and follow on in unity of steps. They had their twelve different standards, and they had their own local officers, but it was the one God of Israel in the midst of the whole. And when the cloud moved the north-west corner moved as soon as the south-east corner; for that centre cloud moved the whole. And we are a kingdom of priests, and the Lord dwells in every different local assembly, and no local church is made dependent upon any neighbouring church, because each one has equal access to the Lord. Ephesus was close to Smyrna, and Smyrna was in a better condition; but Ephesus was not to send to Smyrna, but to go straight to the Lord with her cold heart. Thus one church need not be spiritually dull because its neighbour church is dull. O the blessed

sufficiency of the Lord for each local church! Just as with our souls individually. If I am cold and my wife burning with love, am I to borrow of her warmth? Nay, I have to go to the Lord for myself and get my heart warmed. O that each assembly might be waked up to take hold of the Lord, and to say, Lord Jesus, *Thou* in the midst of us art the power, be the meetings however full, our readings however earnest, our care for each other however sincere. O let Jesus tie us with one love-tie to Himself, and let us not be seeking, as assemblies, to tie ourselves to each other. That is "independency," you say, and is not this a wrong thing? Yes, if it be independency in the flesh; but if because I am dependent upon God, then it is a very blessed thing. Independency in the flesh is a great snare; but independency of my next saint, because I am dependent upon Him, is the very wealth and health of my soul. O for the local churches and assemblies to be independent; not with a saucy independency, but because *He* feeds His lambs, and to Him each church has to go that He may trim its dimly-burning wick. There is just now a danger of making assemblies dependent in whole districts on aid periodically or occasionally rendered from outside them. O avoid it. Smyrna is not told to mend up Ephesus, nor Philadelphia to set Laodicea right; but each assembly is told to come straight to the Lord Himself—to come under His searching eye. And the burning feet are seen treading among them all with the gentleness of woman whilst also the glorious Son of Man. He loves each church, and puts her, as a mother, to His breast, whilst He searches her to show her her condition.

At the same time we are to *get acquainted* with other assemblies, though we are not to interfere with their matters. Revelation ii. and iii. teach us this duty of acquaintance, for a copy of this Book of the Revelation would be sent to each church, with all the seven messages in it. Thus Ephesus would have before her the other six messages as well as her own. Thyatira, too, saw in a moment her own state, but she was also informed of the state of the other six. Thus there was no isolation of any one of them, for

they formed all of them a part of God's one Church. Yet each was not to interfere with the state of any of the other six, except to give thanks for it or to pray for it; when it was a matter of edifying, or of discipline, each was to come to the Lord Himself. Nor do we find that the seven angels came together to consider the case of all. There was no coalition of the lampstands, and no coalition of the angels. Coalition is not power; nearness to the Son of God is. It is this blessed fact of Jesus in the midst of us all as assemblies which is our strength, for who else would or could care for all the number? But God is sufficient. The Son of Man is in the midst; let us roll on Him the burden. If you hear of division in this or that assembly it is not for you to go in a band to set it right; but get you together and pray about it. It will not be wrong for you, individually as the Lord's servants, to go if you are asked to help; but the moment assemblies begin to be dependent one upon another what are they different from a sectarian synod? they become a man-made confederacy. There was no confederacy in these seven churches, but Jesus in the midst of all. And this is the more remarkable because these seven were in a very poor condition, and five of them are bidden, as assemblies, to repent. And who should give this repenting grace? Could they give it to each other? Each must go to the Son of Man in the midst; and as they looked into these holy eyes, and felt these burning feet, and, more still, as they saw and felt His womanly love, that moment they begin to repent. The Master had not left His first love, and, therefore, Ephesus might well melt and weep that she should have come to love Him less.

Such are some of the lessons this vision of the lampstands teaches. And should they all disappear in their united and assembly character of lampstands, and only a single individual remain where each lampstand formerly was, the Gracious Holy Master still cares for each such individual, for He seven times says: "He that hath an ear, let *him* hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." Compare Isaiah lxvi. 2: "To *this man* will I look, even to him that . . . trembleth at My word." What a God is our God!

## SIN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**A**LTHOUGH it be true that we have to do with One "who declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done"; yet has there always been a question at stake, between God and man, which in its results has only served to bring out into clearer view man's utter ruin and inability to respond to the voice of God.

Until the coming of the Holy Son of God, the dealings of God with man were about sin and righteousness. Before the law was given, "the wickedness of man was great in the earth"; under the law, "sin became exceeding sinful," and righteousness could not come by it. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." And Christ came, offered Himself without spot to God, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: settled the question, by receiving the wages of sin in His own person. It was enough—and God no longer seeks righteousness from sinners, nor charges home upon them the penalties attached to His broken law.

The testimony of the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, is unto One who was once offered to bear the sins of many; to declare the righteousness of God, that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Man, who by nature could not render to God the righteousness which He sought, thus stands before Him perfect and complete in Christ, made the righteousness of God in Him. To His blessed name the Holy Ghost bears witness. He takes of His things and shows them unto us. But if that name be rejected, the office of the Spirit is still to convince of *sin*—not merely on account of the flood of iniquity which rises up in the heart, or the deeds of darkness men have done—but "OF SIN, because they believe not on Me." This now is the question between God and man—the reception or rejection of God's dear Son; and on those who receive Him not, the wrath of God abideth (John i. 12; xii. 48).

But not so with the Church. From such God seeks righteousness, the conscience void of offence, the unsullied garment, the washed feet. His word is, "Holiness becometh thine house for ever"; and if any man defile the temple of God, judgment shall begin there, him shall God destroy. For our God is a consuming fire. Oh! that our souls had so gazed upon the beauty of holiness, so loved Him in whom it shone forth in perfect excellency, that our hearts might be riveted upon Him in the love of it, expand in the liberty of it, and shrink unceasingly from the touch of evil. It is in the love of holiness that hatred of sin grows. If we are living in the light of heaven, our souls will sicken in the darkness of this world:

if we are drinking of the pure river of water of life, we shall have no taste for the pleasures of sin: indeed, our standard will rise, we shall grow in the perception of what becometh saints. What yesterday we could do with a free heart, to-day will be sin to us; we shall go on to the end, like the leper after he was pronounced clean, cutting off many a natural thing, which has seemed to belong to our existence; putting off many a habit, which has formed part of our character; with the daily prayer on our lips, that God would sanctify us wholly, and preserve us—spirit, soul, and body—blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C.

## Correspondence.

### JAPAN.

TOKYO.—I have just returned from a holiday in the country, spent principally at a village on the east coast, 200 miles north of Tokyo, where I have been living in a Japanese hotel. House furnishing is a more simple matter in Japan than at home, for tables, chairs, and bedsteads are dispensed with, and linen and cutlery are also wanting. My room at the hotel contained nothing but a little cupboard in one corner and a cushion, to which was afterwards added a mirror. The floor, as is always the case in Japanese houses, was entirely covered with thick straw mats, with an outer skin of fine rushes, and here I squatted, and ate, and read, in the intervals of bathing and walking, having always to put off my shoes before entering the room. When night came two wadded quilts were stretched on the floor, a large green mosquito-net was hung up, and a little bolster, stuffed apparently with seeds, completed the sleeping arrangements. Servants were called by clapping the hands, a summons they were somewhat slow to obey. The Japanese guests were served with boiled rice, vegetables, and fish, which they ate out of small bowls with a pair of wooden skewers held in the right hand. These skewers, called *hashi* in Japan, are more widely known as *chopsticks*. Rice is the chief food of the country, but people who are too poor to afford this use millet or some other grain. A huge kind of radish, called *daikon*, with an evil smell, various kinds of beans and seaweed, are in much request. The Japanese are very fond of tea, made from the native shrub, and prepared differently from that used in China. This is poured out of a doll's teapot into tiny bowls without handles, and is sucked into the mouth with much enjoyment, no milk or sugar being added. From the town of Sendai, 16 miles away, I was able to procure tinned meat and an occasional loaf of bread to add to the rice furnished by the hotel.

The views in all that district were beautiful. Where the sea did not form bays and inlets between rocky headlands, there were wide stretches of tender, green ricefields, unbroken by hedges, intermingled with hills that were covered with coarse grass or with trees of varied foliage, dark clumps of pine trees predominating. Often, in walking in the country, I came upon large upright stones, with rough edges, on which were

engraved the name of some sacred mountain, these stones being generally set up on some little eminence beneath a tree (1 Kings xiv. 23).

Many hundreds of Scripture portions, and a good many Testaments, were distributed in villages, in hotels, in trains, and in steamers—two young Japanese believers being my assistants in this work. These young men—the one a present the other a former pupil of mine—were heathens when they first came to read the Bible with me, but now they are seeking to serve Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. It is difficult for those who have never devoted attention to the subject to realise what idolatry reduces a man to. Philosophers, philanthropists, travellers, may have their theories about the alleged good to be found in all forms of religion, but God's Word tells us that if men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gives them over to a reprobate mind, so that they not only themselves commit such things as are worthy of death, but have pleasure in them that do them. If we neglect to exercise the members of our body, or our force of will, or our moral faculties, we know that, in each case, what was capable of improvement deteriorates and dries up. The Japanese have long been without the knowledge of God. There is a general profession of *Shintoism*, which appears to be summed up in having respect for the emperor and for their forefathers, and in following the laws of nature, a moral code being considered quite unnecessary. *Buddhism*, which is an elaborate but atheistic system, was introduced from Korea thirteen centuries ago, and is still professed, in an altered form, by many. The Shinto shrines, which are continually met, aim at extreme simplicity; the Buddhist temples aim at gorgeousness and elaboration. Take away God from the heart and conscience of a nation, and what will be the attitude of their minds towards spiritual things, when, after long centuries of indifference, they are spoken to of sin, of salvation, and of eternal life? One of the two young men referred to, at the time of his conversion, joined a Japanese "church," of which he has since then been an active member. He complains that there are hardly any earnest Christians amongst the members, and they have many troubles, partly because a former pastor pressed baptism upon persons who had only attended a couple of services there. At the hotel we had Gospel meetings, and this young man talked to individuals, but he says the trouble is that "people in Japan have no religious thought." That is, though interested in novelties, and desirous of every advanced form of civilisation, they have not a sense of sin and so do not trouble about salvation.

A few days ago I travelled with an earnest missionary, who spoke of the difficulty of finding really spiritual men amongst the professed converts, and he gave it as his opinion that not more than one-tenth of the 31,000 nominal Christians in Japan were truly converted. Some will run well even for years, he said, and then fall away. One of the best authorities on Japan—Professor Chamberlain—has recently published a book, in which he says that the Japanese are "essentially an undevotional people," and, from another authority, he quotes the following:—"It is well known that one of the most marked characteristics of the Japanese mind

is its lack of interest in metaphysical, psychological, and ethical controversy of all kinds. It is seldom you can get them to pay sufficient attention to such questions to admit of their understanding even their main outlines. . . . The Japanese cannot understand why our controversialists should wax so fervent over psychological, ethical, religious, and philosophical questions, failing to perceive that this fervency is the result of the intense interest taken in such subjects."

Sectarianism, with its scheme of a "visible church," whether there be spiritual life or not, and religious rationalism, with its mild scorn for the supernatural, have been at work here with the necessary consequence. A Japanese believer told me, on his return from abroad, that he was surprised and sorry to find how weak many of the native churches were, and he afterwards regretted to me the hold which money appeared to have over the hearts of some of the pastors. The adherents of the various Presbyterian missions have joined together and formed a "Union Church" for Japan. In this there are many unfilled pastorates, partly from lack of suitable men for the post, partly from the lack of congregational funds to pay such men. Here, I am afraid, there is a dangerous rock ahead. A "pastor" who has travelled in the United States returns home with a black coat and a white tie, and with some experience of the place there accorded to persons styled "reverend." In Japan he sees, on the one hand, humble congregations, many of them too poor to pay even a very modest salary to an ordinary native pastor. On the other hand, he sees mission schools and houses worth many thousands of dollars, and he sees many foreign missionaries living in what appears to a Japanese to be very expensive style, all supported by money drawn from abroad—save that some of the missionaries earn money by teaching in Japanese schools. "Loaves and fishes" have their attraction in all quarters of the globe, and he must be a man with much grace who does not view the existing state of things with some discontent, more especially as the Japanese are an independent nation with an independent spirit. Already there have been outbursts of an anti-foreign feeling.

So much jubilation is continually expressed concerning the triumphs of the Gospel in Japan that I feel it necessary to say something on the other side. The pleasing manners and the apparent earnestness of those who come and listen to the Gospel for the first time have a great charm for those who have not found by experience that most of these same persons become "sick" or "busy" before many weeks have passed, and so they pass out of sight. Not out of the sight of God, however, who records the testimony delivered to them, and to whom the faithful ambassador is alike a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and them that perish. The one weapon for this warfare is that sword of the Spirit which can pierce as easily through Japanese Sadducism as through British Pharisism. Let us not commit the folly of thinking the battle is won already, and let us not, by guilty negligence, have the blood of this people upon us, but let us afresh gird up our loins for the conflict, and set up our banners in the name of our God.

WILLIAM GEORGE SMITH.

45 Shimo Rokuban Cho, Kojimachi,  
Tokyo, August 29, 1890.

## Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*. Answers should occupy not more than *four pages* of ordinary note paper. Replies for insertion in *December number* should be in by November 10 at latest, to get volumes ready in good time.

THE EDITOR

Replies are invited to the following:—

**EXCOMMUNICATION.**—What Scripture can be given for excluding from fellowship those who hold fundamental error?

**THE FAITHFUL REMNANT.**—Is it right for those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart to view themselves as forming the faithful remnant of their day?

**ORDINATION OF THE LORD'S SERVANTS.**—Would it be scriptural for brethren to lay their hands on the head of one going forth in the Lord's service in those days?

**ASSEMBLY SINGING.**—In our worship or fellowship meetings is it best for one brother to lead regularly, or should each brother have opportunity to lead his own hymn or psalm?

**ONE BELIEVER PURGING HIMSELF FROM OTHERS.**—What is the teaching of 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21? Does "purge himself from these" include both the vessels "to honour" and "to dishonour" found in the "great house" in verse 20?

**THE LORD'S-DAY.**—How may we lawfully view the obligations of the Sabbath-day, as transferred to it? Would it not be of much benefit to the church if the whole question as to the obligations of the Lord's-day were fully entertained from the Word?

### SALVATION AND SECURITY.

**QUESTION 367.**—Is salvation on condition of our faithfulness, or can we be lost after having been born again from above?

**Ans. A.**—The new covenant repeated in Hebrews viii., which also is termed "everlasting" in Hebrews xiii., *ensureth* three things—the putting by God of His laws in our minds; His being our God and we His people; and, thirdly, the absolute remission of our sins. God is the Maker and Christ is the Surety of this new covenant, which is ratified by His blood, and every one who is brought by faith in Jesus Christ into this covenant is God's own child, His possession—a sheep of Christ's flock which He is bound to keep, and of which flock He can lose none (John x).

A. O. M.

**Ans. B.**—Thank God our salvation does not depend on our faithfulness, but on the immutable faithfulness of God, "with whom can be no variation, *neither shadow that is cast by turning*" (James i. 17, R.V.). Salvation is the gift of God (Eph. ii. 8-9) but in no wise separate from God, for "Behold God is my salvation" (Isa. xii. 2). "He that hath the Son hath the Life" (1 John v. 12, R.V.); thus we learn how "the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God" (1 Sam. xxv. 29). In John x. we have

the *double hand*, the hand of the Son (v. 28) and the hand of the Father (v. 29), the two becoming one for the eternal life of the sheep (v. 30), and in Col. iii. 3 we have the *double hiding*. But if we ruthlessly wrest Scripture from its connexional and dispensational settings, we can make it *teach what we hold*, rather than *hold to what it teaches*.

T. B.

**Editor's Note.**—"All that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). "Whom He justified them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 30). These scriptures give us a golden chain of three links, and God pledges Himself to maintain the integrity of the links: faith, justification, glory! The words in John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," are usually taken from their connection applied to the sinner as coming to the Saviour, and made to mean "I will in no wise reject." But whilst we would not question the propriety of such a use of the passage we would submit that it implies much more and is one of the strongest points in Scripture as to the security of the believer. The Lord, amid abounding opposition and unbelief comforts Himself thus, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." Then He adds the words, "And Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," or "surrender" or "give up." It is the same word as in Acts xviii. 38, "they cast out the wheat." Then He goes on to say why He will not surrender one such, viz.: "For I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me, and this is the Father's will which hath sent Me that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." The great truth here taught is, that if Christ surrendered, cast out, or failed to "raise up" in His own likeness one whom the Father had drawn to Him He would have failed to accomplish the Father's will! Such is the security of "every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him" (ver. 40).

(See also article "Holding on" in present No.)

### RECONCILIATION.

**QUESTION 368.**—Is the reconciliation spoken of in Hebrews ii. 17 a present work of our Lord Jesus Christ as Priest, or was it effected at the cross?

**Ans. A.**—In Hebrews ii. 17 we get the object of the High Priest's office stated, viz.:—"To make reconciliation for the sins of the people." This object the Aaronic priesthood by their constant sacrifices and offerings sought to keep in view. A continual but never perfect work. (See Heb. x.) But Christ, by His one offering of Himself once for all, has obtained eternal redemption, and ever liveth to make intercession for His own—on the ground of His finished work. God has reconciled us to Himself, and we have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son—for us. The perpetual virtue of His blood of reconciliation ever speaketh to God for us—and ever is speaking to us our sole ground of confidence before God. A. O. M.

**Ans. B.**—The word "reconciliation" should be rendered *propitiation*, and relates solely to that effected on the cross—it is by blood alone. Men have sinned—are sinners, and "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of

men" (Rom. i. 18). "The wages of sin is death," and "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. vi. 23 and v. 12). But there comes nigh a Priest with an offering—"His own blood"—"into heaven itself." God's eye rests upon that blood, and finds rest, or is propitiated thereby—in respect of sin. But that blood was shed upon the cross alone, therefore, the Priest comes nigh as "having obtained" eternal redemption; which was obtained, because the blood *did* propitiate the eye of God in respect of sin. A priest is one who comes nigh with an offering, either for himself or for others; if for the latter, he must truly represent those for whom he comes nigh, therefore, it behoved Christ "to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make *propitiation* for the sins of the people." H. G. H.

**Editor's Note.**—To the foregoing replies we would add, that whilst propitiation was effected typically by the blood shed at the altar, the mercy-seat with the blood sprinkled upon it once a year indicated the continuance of the efficacy of the blood shed at the altar as maintaining righteous ground of access to, and communion with Jehovah. The word "mercy-seat" is more correctly "the propitiatory," and is the same used in I John ii. 2. "He is the propitiation" or "the mercy-seat." Not "He was" but "He is." Thus "the Lamb as it had been slain" in the midst of the Throne, presents Himself and represents us continually in all the value of His death or blood-shedding accomplished on Calvary.

### HALF-FILLED HALLS.

**QUESTION 369.**—How are we to get the people to come into the hall for preaching the Gospel? We are failing to get them to come in, though we do go out to invite them in.

**Ans.**—Let the hall be well ventilated, with good light, comfortable seats, and in a good locality. These are not out-of-the-way-things. Let the district be visited regularly with good sound Gospel books or tracts, and let the people be kindly invited to the meetings. Let the men or women who thus visit be men and women whose lives are blameless before the world. Let it be understood that the brother or brethren who seek to preach in the hall be fitted of God for such work, and let their lives also be commending the Gospel. In short, let the company who seek to carry on Gospel work in any given place see that they are pleasing to God; let us ever remember that the glory of God is before preaching the Gospel. I Samuel ii. 30 is not out of date, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." Let us give God the first and the best; then (Mal. iii. 10) will be fulfilled in our experience, "Not room enough to receive the blessing." Let us beware of some modern attractions. God's unvarnished Gospel preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven is yet the power of God unto salvation. Difficult times are occasions for laying hold of "The God of all Grace and Salvation." When Peter preached at Pentecost about three thousand were converted; when Stephen preached the same Gospel they gnashed on him with their teeth.

WM. M.

## WHAT IS USURY?

QUESTION 370.—Does Deut. xxiii. 19, 20 forbid a brother in the Lord, in this dispensation, taking usury from another brother?

Ans.—“Usury” is the same as the more modern word “interest.” The New Testament instruction is “do good and lend, hoping for nothing again” (Luke vi. 35)—i.e., not expecting to receive again either principal or interest. If a brother in his need seeks a loan, and the

one appealed to is able and willing and believes it to be for the brother's good to grant it, then surely it is out of keeping with all Scripture for the lender to stipulate for interest. On the other hand, a loan might be sought as a business transaction, and security given, and interest arranged to mutual satisfaction. This would be quite a different matter. Under such circumstances no right-minded person would seek or accept a loan without paying interest. No Christian should lend what he cannot afford to lose. ED.

### The Spread of the Gospel in other Lands in connection with “Echoes of Service.”

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,

We shall be thankful for your kind attention to some remarks upon the above subject. Whilst in religious societies there is apt to be too much dependence on *man*, care is needed, on the other hand, lest we forget our mutual dependence one upon another, and fail to share one another's burdens.

With the leading thought of FELLOWSHIP, the small periodical, *Echoes of Service*, was begun (under another title) about nineteen years ago. The idea of assuming to be a missionary society was, and is, far from the editors' thoughts. They have purposely avoided using funds for *sending out* labourers, and have neither directed nor controlled their movements; but have always pressed the responsibility of each servant to his own Master. They have not issued formal reports, but have given the ordinary letters of brethren and sisters (often kindly furnished by friends), and these have drawn out the hearts of the Lord's people—some to give themselves to His service, others to give of their substance.

Thank God, this still goes on, and though the offerings of believers, individually and collectively, have steadily increased, the number of labourers going forth in the Lord's name has so increased that they are as dependent on Him now as they were years ago; their need is only partly supplied by these offerings, and abundant opportunity remains for those who desire to communicate with them directly. The service in connection with this periodical thus maintains the simplicity of its original character. It is still mainly a channel for letters from labourers and of gifts for them. All such gifts are sent out as received, without deduction by the editors, and for years sundry expenses connected with office work—often a very large item in missionary operations—have chiefly been borne by our dear brother Dr. Maclean.

Few persons would conceive the amount and variety of correspondence that has to be attended to. For this in course of time it became necessary to obtain the aid of efficient and discreet helpers. The quantity of book-keeping is also considerable, as the custom of sending a gift for a particular labourer, or for division among several, entails the careful keeping of many minute accounts. Still, the linking of God's children here, by this means, with brethren and sisters in other lands the editors highly value, and desire to maintain, as it leads to much thanksgiving and prayer.

In 1878 the regular assistance of a brother in the Lord in office work was secured, and about six years ago that of a second was kindly provided, through the aid of a few friends, by one who perceived the need. Three years ago, when a change was made, the matter was mentioned in *Echoes of Service*, and the response has in some measure helped towards the salaries of the two brethren employed.

The printing of periodicals requires a certain sum by way of capital, as any return through the ordinary trade channels takes time. This demand has likewise been hitherto met by our brother. Now, however, as he has nourished the work so long, it seems prudent to put the whole business matter on a simpler footing, so that should others unexpectedly be called upon to take up the editing of *Echoes of Service*, with its connected links for aiding God's servants, they might not be deterred by reason of money responsibilities.

Though a change is reluctantly made it seems only right that *Echoes of Service* should, as far as possible, supply something towards contingent expenses, and it is therefore intended to publish it *from Bath* next year. This will allow of a desirable alteration that would otherwise be difficult: the issuing of a supplementary number at a halfpenny, in the middle of each month. The success of this arrangement will depend on the hearty fellowship of believers interested in the spread of the Gospel.

Much may be done if a brother or sister in an assembly will *obtain the names of those who will take a copy, receive payment in advance for six months or a year, and see that the copies are delivered*, which can easily be done after a meeting. With a little effort in this way *Echoes of Service* would not only be conducted without expense, but would also do something towards defraying the salaries of helpers, &c., and we trust that God would incline His stewards to supply what might then be lacking.

Whilst truly thankful for all the fellowship that has been shown in the great work of carrying the Gospel to the nations, we trust that the affections of the Lord's people will be more abundantly drawn out, both in prayers and gifts, to the furtherance of His glory and to their own blessing.

Your fellow-servants in Christ Jesus,

HENRY GROVES,  
HENRY DYER,  
W. H. BENNET.

October, 1890.

Any correspondence relating to the above may be addressed to Mr. W. H. BENNET, The Park, Yeovil.



## THE MUTUAL RELATION OF ASSEMBLIES.

**I**N these days of confusion and departure from the truth, all who truly desire to be subject to the whole Word of God will value every effort that is made to lead them to the recognition of any of its teachings they may have overlooked; but they will at the same time require full proof that what they are asked to accept and carry out is God's truth. The examples given in early days for our imitation, and the commands we are called to obey, are given in plain and simple language, however much that language may be obscured to us by traditional interpretations; and, in seeking to learn the great principles laid down for the guidance of the church of God, we are not left to deductions or inferences.

"*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good,*" is an exhortation given in the earliest of Paul's Epistles; but it is equally important now, and we desire to carry it out with reference to some recent teachings concerning the church and the mutual relation of assemblies of the Lord's people. It will be well at the outset to look at the meaning of the word *church*, and its use in Scripture; for its meaning is very clear, and its two distinct and well-defined uses are very apparent.

### Meaning and Use of the word Church.

The Greek word for *church* is a very expressive one, being formed from the verb to call and the preposition out of; and both the calling and the calling out should ever be in our minds when we use it. Once in the New Testament it is applied to Israel in the wilderness, as those who had been called out of Egypt (Acts vii. 28), and once to the multitude "called together" by Demetrius, while the town clerk of Ephesus used it in its strictly original meaning of "the regular assembly," *i.e.*, a select portion of the inhabitants of the city (Acts xix. 32, 39, 41). On every other occasion it is used of God's redeemed ones, who are called out of the world, and of whom the Lord can say, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 16). Sometimes it is used in its general aspect, that is, as including the whole of the redeemed of this present dispensation (at least), and sometimes simply with

a local reference, as embracing all who are gathered to the Lord Jesus in any one locality.

For it must be added that this thought of being called together is also inherent in the word, at least by usage if not by etymology. The object of calling certain persons from amongst the inhabitants of any city was to bring them together for the transaction of business; and likewise, those whom God calls out of the world are not left as units, but are called together. Thus, in Heb. xii. 22, 23, "the assembly of the first-born" (that is, first-born ones, the word being plural) "which are written in heaven" is as truly a gathered company as are the myriads of angels gathered in festal assembly. That the word, when used locally, has the same meaning is clear from the statement of John, in his third epistle, that Diotrephes "casteth out of the church" those who received him and his messengers. This statement shows in a very solemn manner that a company of believers may still bear the name of a church, while the most godly are cast out of it by the high-handed dealings of those who, instead of being examples according to Christ, have become lords over the heritage. But, whatever misuse there may be of the word, it is evident that, as originally used, it included all who were called out of the world into fellowship with God, and excluded all others. In its comprehensive sense it embraced all of every period (Eph. v. 25-32), and in its more restricted sense it embraced all in any given spot, as "the church that was at Antioch."

The word is used by the Lord Himself, as the gospel by Matthew shows, in both these senses. When He says, "Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi.), He looks through the whole of this present period, from Pentecost till the moment of His coming again. He is the great Builder, and all others build only as sent by Him. The expression, "My Church," is very beautiful. It is His as including all who are given Him by the Father, His as purchased by His own death, and it shall soon be His in true companionship, for He will "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27). Then, indeed,

shall it be fully manifest to all that the gates of hades have not prevailed against it.

The Lord also uses the word in its strictly *local* sense, when He instructs His disciples how to act if an offending brother refuses to listen to the one against whom he has trespassed. The latter is first to take with him one or two others, and if the offender still refuses to listen, the Lord says, "Tell it unto *the church*; but if he refuse to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. xviii. 16, 17). In spite of all the terrible misuse of this Scripture by Romish and other systems, it is evident on the face of it that it is a purely local assembly that is spoken of. Still, it lays down the great principle that anyone refusing to hear the voice of an assembly, *when it is simply carrying out the commandment of the Lord* in such a matter as this, forfeits his right to a place in it, and therefore in any other assembly, till he is restored in soul.

It is when we come to the Acts of the Apostles that we find the word used historically; and, of course, in the early days to which the first few chapters refer, the local and the general are one. In Acts v. 11 and viii. 1, 3, it is used of saints at Jerusalem. There were many thousands (iv. 4, v. 14, vi. 1), but they formed the one church. We can hardly suppose that they met habitually in any one place for the breaking of bread, and in Acts ii. 46 "breaking bread at home" is distinguished from their "continuing daily with one accord in the temple." But, wherever or however they assembled, they all gave constant attention to the apostles' teaching, continued in hearty and holy fellowship, joining in united worship and ministering to one another's necessities, observed the breaking of bread in remembrance of their Lord, and gave themselves to prayer (v. 42). Even after the great scattering (Acts viii. 1) the expression, as well as the reality, of unity is still kept up, for in Acts ix. 31 we should read, "Then had *the church* (R.V.) rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria." The reference is evidently to the whole church in its unity, and not to any limit of one locality as distinguished from another. Persecution had been general, and now God mercifully gave rest to the church at large.

The local use of the word becomes more apparent after the bringing in of Gentile converts at Antioch.

In the Epistles of Paul we find mention both of the church in a city and the churches in a province. He writes to "the church of God which is at Corinth," and to "the churches of Galatia," while the church in its completeness was his special theme. He says, "I persecuted the church of God," and warns against giving offence "to the church of God" as distinguished from Jews and Gentiles, that is, the church *generally*, as distinct from all others in the world. He also speaks of "every church" and "all churches" in their local character (1 Cor. iv. 17; vii. 17).

#### Combinations of Assemblies.

All this is simple and unquestionable; but it seemed necessary to notice it before looking for a *third* sense in which we are now told that the word church is used. It is said that Scripture gives examples of the *ecclesiastical unity* of the many churches of any given district, such as Macedonia, Galatia, Achaia, and even of the churches spread over the whole of the large area in which the strangers were scattered abroad, to whom Peter addressed his Epistles (1 Peter i. 1). It is assumed that these churches "were linked together into fellowship and unity" by an "order of representation," that is, by the elders of each assembly having one central place of meeting to which they were responsible to repair at certain fixed times. Those who think they see this order in Scripture, and that it is so clearly set forth that we are responsible to follow it, urge that others "should either accept it or give godly reason for their refusal." This is no unreasonable request, nor is it difficult to comply with the latter alternative. A true fellowship of assemblies is everywhere evident in Scripture, for all own one Head, and are indwelt by one Spirit; but the evidence of unions of assemblies is indeed sought for in vain if Scripture is to guide us, while it is abundant if tradition is to be followed.

The first and chief example given of the union of churches is Acts ix. 31, where it is considered that the word *church* in the singular expresses this union of the assemblies of the region specified. But, as already said, it seems

far more natural to take the word here as a general description of the whole church. For though many who received the Word at Pentecost returned to their homes as messengers to others of the grace of God, and it is evident that there were disciples at Damascus, yet we have hitherto had no mention of the church or churches beyond those in the three portions of the Holy Land here named. And it may be repeated that the statement, "Then had the church rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria," does not mean that the church *there* had rest in contrast with other churches, but that *the entire church*, which had been so persecuted, now had rest. Further proof of this is given in the fact that in later years, when many other churches existed, Paul, with reference to this very period and district, speaks of "the churches of Judea," and not the church (Gal. i. 22; see also 1 Thess. xi. 14).

That the union of the churches of Judea and Samaria and Galilee was greatly helped by their link, through the apostles, with the church at Jerusalem no one can question. There is not, indeed, the slightest hint of elders of the assemblies *going up to Jerusalem* as representatives; but there is a very clear intimation of an apostolic ministry *going forth from Jerusalem* which would both establish and unite. Peter and John visited Samaria (Acts viii. 14), and Peter is spoken of as visiting generally (ix. 32). And just as it was by no rule or law, but by the natural working of divine love, that the fellowship of the first disciples was formed and grew, so the unity of the church in this district was not maintained by outward organisation, but by the unhindered fellowship of the Spirit, being fostered by the care of those whose joy as well as responsibility it was to tend and feed the flock of God (John xxi. 15-17).

### The Churches of the Gentiles.

What was true of the churches of Judea was also true of the churches of other lands. If Paul and Barnabas had thought it good to appoint some centre of government for "the churches of the Gentiles," what place would so naturally have been fixed upon as Antioch? But instead of there being any hint of such a thing as "representatives" of various assemblies meeting at Antioch, we find that

it was by a ministry that went forth from Antioch that the churches were established and confirmed (see Acts xv. 36, 41; xvi. 4, 5). Concerning these new churches the church at Antioch rejoiced, but any thought of jurisdiction over them or of the claim of central authority is vainly searched for in Scripture. Each of the churches would surely have been commended to God and the Word of His grace, as was the church at Ephesus with its elders.

It has already been noticed that when Paul referred to a district he used the word *churches*. When writing from Corinth to "the beloved of God in Rome," he said, "The churches of Christ salute you." He did not say "the church of Achaia." So in writing to Corinth he says, "The churches of Asia salute you," and he both speaks of and addresses "the churches of Galatia." It is urged that the charge to the "spiritual ones," *as a whole*, in the churches of Galatia (Gal. vi. 1), proves "the close and compact fellowship" of these churches; that is, that the charge was to be carried out by *all* the elders assembling at some central spot. Now if this means anything it cannot mean less than that if, in some assembly, a man was "overtaken in a fault," the elders of all the churches of Galatia were to be called together to restore him. Can we accept this as the evident meaning of Gal. vi. 1? Is it not clear to a simple reader that such an exhortation definitely applies to the "spiritual ones" of *the particular assembly* to which the erring one belonged, and, moreover, that it is not limited to *elders*, but rather is designed to lead to the exercise of godly care for one another by *all* those addressed?

So when Peter writes to the saints scattered over a large area (i. 1), he says, "Elders which are *among you* I exhort. . . . Feed the flock of God which is *among you*" (v. 1, 2). That is, the elders in the respective flocks were, as under-shepherds, to feed and tend them, seeking to be examples to the flock, and not lords over it. But what evidence is there that the elders here addressed had one centre of meeting? The flock was scattered in various countries, yet they are not reminded of their earthly centre, but of heaven as the place of their enjoying together their true inheritance. If there had been an earthly centre for the assemblies of the six countries

named in chap. i. 1, it certainly seems strange that they were not told whither they must repair or send their representatives.

### No Visible Centre.

But, it may be asked, was there no visible centre in the church? Yes; for a time there was. Jerusalem was that centre, and probably some thought it would remain such. How long the apostles remained there we cannot tell; but when a question arose at Antioch it was referred to Jerusalem for an authoritative settlement, for there the apostles were. But soon Jerusalem itself was swept away, and God never gave any other centre. Was not the very object of the Epistle to the Hebrews to draw the hearts of saints to heaven, as the *only* centre, and to the Great High Priest ever living for them, and ever the same, though the elders passed away? (Heb. xiii. 7, 8).

Even while Jerusalem still existed we see how its central position was abused; for it was when certain men came from it to Antioch, and, relying apparently upon the name of James, exercised a kind of assumed judicial authority, that Paul had to withstand Peter (Gal. ii. 11-13). The peculiar influence and terror which resulted from this assumed authority is seen in Peter's fear and the dissimulation by which "even Barnabas was carried away." But uprightness was lacking, and "the truth of the gospel" was imperilled.

The true position of the churches of God in this dispensation is given to us in Rev. i.-iii. There we have a perfect picture of the unity of all, and yet the *separate responsibility* of each assembly to Christ as Lord. "I saw," says John, "seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man." They were distinct from one another, yet were they most truly linked together. The bond, however, was an *invisible* one; it was the presence of Christ, unseen by the natural eye, but most real to faith. Each church stood in its dependence upon and subjection to Him, and therefore all were truly one, and any person going from one church to another in His name was welcomed. It is objected that Rev. ii. and iii. being symbolical, it is not safe to be guided by them, unless truth deduced from them be proved by other plain scriptures. This we quite endorse,

and would point out that the teaching so clearly expressed here in figure corresponds exactly with what we have seen from other scriptures. Already, indeed, there were some who brought not the doctrine of Christ and had to be rejected (2 John 10), and already there was a spirit at work that rejected those sent by the apostle John himself. But as yet these were only the beginnings of that departure of heart from the Lord which resulted in serious contentions and differences. Instead of being humbled by these things and seeking help from God, men sought to correct them by bringing in systems and centres of control, which in due time grew into various systems of government, as distinguished from the simple oversight or eldership of the New Testament. But these arrangements superseded the apostolic order of things, and are not found in Scripture. Let it once be assumed that "the churches of Judea" were maintained in ecclesiastical unity by the representatives of these assemblies having a centre at Jerusalem, and we need only go one step further to satisfy the most ardent Episcopalian who regards James as the first bishop of Jerusalem, and as having jurisdiction over these churches.

For a system which is distinctly representative we may readily turn to Presbyterianism, as the following extract from an English dictionary will show:—"A *presbytery* consists of all the pastors of churches within a certain district, and one ruling elder, a layman, from each. This body receives appeals from the church session, and appeals from the presbytery may be carried to the provincial synod. A synod is composed of several presbyteries. The *General Assembly* is the highest ecclesiastical tribunal, composed of ministers and ruling elders delegated from each presbytery." From this, as a representative system, not a few believers who desire simply to follow the Word of God have felt obliged to separate

### Local Applications of Titles or Words.

It is very important to remember that there are words in Scripture which we cannot use in the present day with the same local application. Men could then speak correctly of "*the church of God at Corinth*," or "*the saints at Ephesus*," whereas when such expressions are used in the present day they savour either of ignorance or arrogance. For there is nothing that can be

pointed to as exclusively "the church of God" in a town, nor can any one assembly be called "the saints" in such a place, as if there were no others. Let any number of the children of God gather to the name of the Lord, refusing to own sectarian titles, they can only be a fragment of His church, and if they have any apprehension of what that church is they will own that they are such.

At the same time, those who are thus gathered may certainly be spoken of as the church in such a house or such a hall, and are responsible to act as becomes a church of God. Both the privileges and the responsibilities of an assembly of God are theirs, and the Lord is their sufficiency for all godly care and discipline. Those who went up from Babylon could never have spoken of themselves as *Israel*, to the exclusion of others. They knew they were but a "remnant" (Ezra ix. 8); but they were as truly responsible to obey God's law as were Israel in the glory of Solomon's reign, and God was their sufficiency as at the beginning, and encouraged them with the assurance, "My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not" (Hag. ii. 5). So we have "God and the Word of His grace," and it behoves us, in lowliness of mind, to seek both to carry out *all* His truth and to cherish the mind of Christ towards *all* His saints.

But are we to do this simply as individual companies without any links of fellowship? By no means. Let us seek in every way we can, consistently with loyalty to the truth, to promote individual fellowship with all who are Christ's, and the *fellowship* of all assemblies that we can recognise as seeking to carry out true Scriptural order. But let us carefully distinguish this from the mere *combination* of assemblies. In seeking to increase the *fellowship* of assemblies we are owning a unity God has formed; in seeking to form a *combination* of assemblies we should be forming a unity of our own devising.

W. H. B.

"How needful and happy to strive always to have a conscience void of offence, to walk in His light, to seek His power and will; this makes our days happy, our nights peaceful, our lives fruitful, our service effectual, and gives confidence in the world, sweetness in solitude, and power in life.

## CHRISTMAS;

OR,

## "THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE."

BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

THE exultant strains of the heavenly host as they rejoiced at the advent of the long-expected Messiah and Saviour were in keeping with the occasion, and doubtless in perfect accord with the thoughts of God.

The "God of Peace" had sent the great Peace-maker in order that the priceless boon of peace might be bestowed upon this weary, sin-stricken world.

The greeting of His messengers, as they stood on the threshold of the dwellings of Israel, was, "Peace be to this house" (Luke x. 5). If the Son of Peace were there and the welcome given, the messenger of peace was to enter and abide and the blessing of peace was to rest upon the house. But if not, if the messenger were rejected, the blessing of peace must be denied. "It shall turn to you again."

And in some sense such was the character of the presentation of the Christ to Israel. He came as "the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." God was "preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts x. 36).

Had that chosen, favoured nation, to whom He came, received Him as the Prince of Peace and believed the Gospel of Peace, truly peace would have been theirs. The King was presented to them; wise men from the East recognised Him and worshipped Him; the Kingdom of God, which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," was brought nigh to them, was offered to them in the person of the King: but no welcome was given. "He was in the world, and the world knew Him not." "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

In the Gospel by Luke we have recorded, in chapter xi., the culmination morally, though not outwardly, of the guilt of the nation, in their ascription to Satan's power of the mighty works of grace wrought by the Lord Jesus. The "miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by Him" (Acts ii. 22), are attributed to Beelzebub. Then follows the parable of the unclean spirit going out of his house and afterwards returning to it again; indicating the

awful but inevitable subjection of that guilty, Christ-rejecting nation to the power and delusions of Satan.

In the Gospel by Matthew the same climax is reached in chapter xii., and in the Gospel by John also in chapter xii. Each of these three gospels is marked at this crucial point by an entire change in its character. Luke xi. ends with woe pronounced upon the nation. Matthew xiii. is altogether in parables, and the reason of the change is in verse 13. John xii. is equally characteristic: "These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them. But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him."

The rejection of Christ was thus an accomplished fact. He was as utterly rejected at that point as when He was hurried out to Calvary to be crucified. The crucifixion was only the manifestation of what was before resolved upon. Individuals received Him; but the nation and the world rejected Him.

Up to this point Christ and His messengers had been preachers of peace, publishers of glad tidings.

But now, in Luke xii., what a change! "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?"

No longer could angel voices chant their song of "peace on earth." The "son of peace" was not here, and the peace that might have rested on Israel and the world returned to the bosom of Him who preached it.

But in Luke xix. we have another song: "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." If earth rejects the Peace of God presented to it in the person of Christ, heaven will welcome Him from the cross and the tomb, and peace and glory shall fill the courts above!

And such is the peace of those who receive Him. It is no earthly rest, no millennial scene of outward glory. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" is all that is here assured to the believer. But he can look up into heaven, and there behold the One who "made peace," in the midst of the throne, and sing, "He is our peace."

The present period of the world's history is not therefore the "golden age" that is usually

associated with the birth of Christ. The Word of God describes it as an "evil age" (Gal. i. 4, Greek).

It commences and takes its character from the rejection and crucifixion of Christ, and terminates in the reception of "the man of sin," the worship of "the beast," and the revelation of the Lord from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel.

The song with which His advent was hailed would have been utterly inconsistent with the conditions of Luke xi., Matthew xii., John xii. The rejection of the Son of God cut short that "Christmas Carol," but angelic ministry found a still more blessed opportunity in Gethsemane and at Joseph's sepulchre.

The purposes of God may indeed be postponed, but frustrated they cannot be. Every promise which God has given of peace and glory on earth, shall surely be fulfilled in His own time. But the prophetic scriptures are plain and unmistakable in their testimony that righteousness must precede peace; judgment must go before blessing; a fiery ordeal must prepare the way for glory.

Meantime this world is in the sight of God the unjudged scene of the rejection and murder of His beloved Son.

That there are many in it who have "kissed the Son," many who have owned their guilt and put their trust in Him, does not alter the fact that the world is under doom, or change its onward course to quickly coming judgment.

Yet, in its ignorance and folly and presumption, a godless world can pretend to celebrate the birth of One whose death stands charged against it! The guilty lips of unregenerate men and women, those whose eyes have never shed a tear of broken-hearted penitence, can dare to take up again the chorus that angels long ago have dropped, and sing of earth as though it were the sphere in which peace from God were to be found and enjoyed.

Greetings and gifts are interchanged by those who are all the while rejecting the gift of God and refusing to credit His Word.

A short musical and fashionable religious service, to act as a salve to the conscience, and then a plunge into utter godlessness and gaiety; such is the ordinary celebration of "Christmas."

The Scriptures authorise the memorial feast that symbolises the *death* of Christ, and connects it with the day that celebrates His *resurrection*; but in vain do we search the Scriptures for any indication of its being either the will of God or the practice of the early Church to recognise a day in commemoration of His *birth*.

As a matter of history, it dates from about the third century. Rome availed herself of it as a high day on which to celebrate "the sacrifice of the Mass," and to worship the Virgin mother.

Such are the associations of the day which are patent and familiar, and one would suppose that little argument would be needed to show all who desire to be guided by the Word of God alone that the only path well pleasing to God is that of separation from all such religious dissipation and mockery.

Yet such is the current and power of fleshly and fashionable religion, that saints of God, who in other matters seek to go by the teaching of the Word and the leading of the Spirit, are being drawn into conformity with the world in these ignorant, superstitious, and unscriptural practices.

A New-year greeting, or a recognition of a birthday, pertaining as they do to the ordinary course of nature, may intelligently and fittingly be utilised by the Christian; such may be occasions of encouragement and exhortation not to be lightly passed over.

But to emphasise the landmarks of worldly religion, to celebrate by cards and gifts, by festivity and frivolity, Easter and Christmas and other such days, is surely a building again of that which we destroyed, a going back to that which is carnal, and a practical denial of the calling of the Christian as risen with Christ and separated unto a heavenly hope.

The earth-rejected Saviour is coming again! "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

O! ye who profess to celebrate with rejoicing His birth, what think ye if, in the midst of the feasting and drinking, and music and dancing, the Lord should come again, His mighty trumpet heard, His own be caught away to meet Him in the air, and you be left to weep and wail and knock at the closed door of mercy, spurned; to knock in vain,

and hear the words, "Depart; I never knew you"?

Yet this is that for which we wait and look and hope—to go in with Him to the marriage. Blessed are they who know their sins forgiven, who, through faith, have peace with God, and who in love are serving, whilst in hope they are waiting for the Lord.

## SELECT SAYINGS FROM SEVERAL ADDRESSES TO BELIEVERS.\*

BY ROBERT C. CHAPMAN, OF BARNSTAPLE.

**CONTENTMENT.**—When the apostle says, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. iv. 11), he means to say, if he is occupied with God—if he is occupied with conformity to Christ, he sees all treasures in Christ; and he sees all to be his. Often, as betwixt himself and his circumstances, he is like a *self-supplied country*. It does not mean here a man submitting to what he cannot help or alter; it is much more than that. He is a royal personage, he is a child of God, a servant of Christ, who is taken up with Christ, and all that belongs to Christ is his. Therefore, he is like a country whose supplies are all within its own borders. May every one of us be like this. Further, each child of God in his own circumstances has a treasury of opportunity for diligently applying himself to the great business of conformity with Christ. It is a mine of wealth, and none but the child of God can dig in it. The opportunity of pleasing God belongs to every child of God. If he won't dig in that gold mine he shall be a great loser. May we learn the great secret of happiness and peace of mind, not living to ourselves, but living unto Him that died and rose again (Rom. xiv. 7-9).

**MAN'S** religion always makes God's justice bend to His mercy. God's justice made a channel for His mercy, by not sparing the Son of His love. Hence, we never read in any book of human religions such words as these—"That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

**SANCTIFICATION.**—In the epistle to the

\* "Addresses to Believers," by R. C. Chapman. Glasgow: The Witness Office. Paper cover, 3d.; Cloth cover, 6d. Post free. Now ready.

Hebrews you do not find the word, "justify," but you find the word, "sanctify." The reason is this, whereas the guilt of sin makes the child of Adam deserve the depths of hell, the uncleanness of sin makes him a leper that shuts him out of the presence of God. Now, *we have been taught by the Spirit of God that we need to have our leprosy cleansed.* The world's religions harden the conscience, and shut God out from their hearts; we cannot endure that. We want something more than salvation from hell; we need salvation from the uncleanness of sin, because we cannot be happy without having communion with God. O how precious this word, "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12). The child of God is not only justified by faith, he is also sanctified by the blood of Christ. There are just as many priests in God's eyes as there are children of God; not one more, and not one less. They are not only priests, but they are kings and priests. Do we all so believe this as to deal with God within the veil, according to our priestly office? Let us see to it that we do it.

AIM HIGH.—"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. iii. 10). I speak very boldly here—when he says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," he does not mean the resurrection of the body, but he means the state of the soul—the very counterpart of the mind of Christ risen; and the very counterpart of Christ's mind on the cross. That indeed is a high aim, but it should be the aim of every child of God. This would strike at the root of all schism and division in the Church of God. Paul means that he should so have the mind of Christ, that as a man looking in a mirror sees the exact counterpart of his own face, so Christ looking at His servant might see the counterpart of His own mind—the Lord at the right hand of God, and the counterpart of the mind that was in Him when He hung upon the cross. What blessedness in the very aim! What blessedness in the very purpose of soul thus to be conformed to Christ!

MY JUDGE.—"He that judgeth me is the Lord." If, from day to day, as the Lord's

servant, whether in the sight of men, or not, whether in my closet, or anywhere, if I am exercised in my conscience towards Christ as my Judge, must I not be so raised above the judgment of my fellow men, that their judgment will have no power over me? I cannot think of the judgment of the mere creature, even though he be a member of Christ, if the question be one of obedience to my Lord.

## Correspondence.

### STONED IN CHINA.

KIUKIANG, KIANGSI.—Perhaps you would like to hear something about Tsing-ngan Hsien, where we lived for over three months. We found the people very dark; they had not even heard the name of Jesus; and their only idea, after talking to them, was, "Yes, pai t'ien ti"—worship *heaven and earth*. All up the Lin river, and on the branch river leading to Ngan-i Hsien and Tsing-ngan, the people had never seen a foreign lady before, so that there is much to contend with in living down the excitement wherever one is seen. In Tsing-ngan we had got over all that, and, day by day, the people were gathering round us. The little children were coming in freely too. First a number came desiring to break off opium, from poor men to Yanian officials. Besides, we could have quite a large medical practice there. We were cheered to have the people coming, even though it were to get something, because we and they had so much to contend with in evil rumours. For instance, people said if they took our medicine they would only live forty days, or two months, or three years! But, as one patient remarked, it was rather a good thing to have one's life insured for *three years*. It was a *great* day in Tsing-ngan when the first man knelt in prayer—indeed two knelt down the same evening; one was the *only* priest in the city, and the other a young scholar of eighteen years of age, who appeared *very bright*. Both confessed the Lord Jesus, even before others; but, strange to say (speaking after the manner of men), the young scholar has fulfilled what the Lord taught us in Matt. xiii. 20, 21, and the priest has not come out because his position is so difficult and he does not know where to get food and clothing. The next man to kneel was a teacher from the Hu-nan province, a "fung shui" "ti li" sien seng, which means a teacher who finds out all the lucky places for burial or building, and also fortunate days for their different important matters, all connected with idolatry and the worship of devils. This man has remained firm. Two other men, a blacksmith and a chemist, have written a joint letter with Mr. Tsao, in which they say they are continuing reading of the Word and prayer (five or six men in different houses), that to death they will not alter their minds, that Jesus is theirs, and they will for ever believe the Gospel. This letter was a great joy and cheer to



us. The scholars said they would turn us out when they assembled for the local examination, but things went on very quietly from day to day, and Mr. Blandford specially wished to be in the city during that time. They first put up a notice calling on the students to turn us out—July 18. We let the magistrate know, and he sent two men to guard the “Jesus Hall,” also spoke to the students collectively on the subject of not interfering with us. I went to the hall as usual on the 18th. Crowds of students gathered and saw me inside with the women and girls, but all was orderly. However, next day, *just after* I had returned from the hall, we heard tremendous cheering and banging of stones. This was a mob destroying the place. The first thing was to sweep the “gospels,” &c., for sale, off the table; the next thing, to tear down a large sheet of white calico at the top of the room with “Jesus loves *men*.” This they could not bear. They soon came on to the tobacconist shop where we had lodgings, and broke up all they could find; throwing all the man’s things out on the street, beating the man when he tried to prevent them kicking Mr. Blandford. The inside doors in time were stoned and broken open, the rioters rushing into the court and shouting, “Ts’en”—“Begone!” “Will you go or not?” “If you do not go we will beat you to death!” By this time I had come down into the yard from our upper room, ready to leave, and my husband and I stood together to face the men as they came pouring in after the stones into our inner yard. As it so happened, we were quite alone, though, if we could have seen into the spiritual world no doubt it would have been with the same result as in 2 Kings vi., 16, 17. “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them” (Ps. xxv.), and so we found it. My husband begged for time to get our things. They were “tuk shu ren” scholars, not thieves, and all would be safe. We feared the landlord’s property would be injured by further delay, so, locking the door, turned to go. The men became very violent. We were stoned on the street, and followed by part of the mob as they drove us out of the north gate down to the ferry. After seeing us into the boat, they gave us this parting word, that if we returned that day they would beat us to death! Dear friends, you may envy us that walk out of Tsing-ngan. Truly we were a spectacle to men and to angels! The mob and stones behind us, the people crowding their doors to see us pass, as, without any protection from a July mid-day sun, we left the city. I may tell you the townspeople did not join the rioters. We saw *one man* run out of his shop to stop another throwing stones at us. He lives beside the hall, and both he and his wife are very friendly, and have been patients. He was the only man we saw openly come to the rescue, with the exception of our landlord. After crossing the ferry and walking some way, we were followed by the landlord, who lent us 400 cash, and then another man came with 200. Both men gave us their umbrellas and fans. Later on we procured chairs, and after some hours travelling we found the boat lying below Ngan-i. It was then after midnight, and we had come a long way by torch-light. Three days later we were back at Wuch’en. To return to Tsing-ngan. After our departure a complete smash up was made of everything we had there. A bonfire was made of our Bibles, dictionaries,

commentaries, and many valuable books, both English and Chinese, also bedding of all kinds, clothes, &c., were committed to the flames, but probably only partially burnt and much more stolen. Then medicines, stores, cooking utensils, and such like, were broken to pieces in the yard below. We saved a few letters received four days before the riot; but a box of stores from Kiukiang and a box from Ireland came, as it were, just in time for the riot. Our special messenger from Kiukiang, who had been gone a fortnight, got back on Tuesday evening, and the riot took place on Saturday. Two of our best men had only left for Wuch’en on *Saturday morning*, thinking we were quite safe! One thing is certain, they did not share our honour or our loss. I feel very hopeful that this will turn out for the furtherance of the Gospel. Please pray for the opening up of these and other dark cities of this district.

J. G. BLANDFORD.

c/o H. B. M. Consul, Kiukiang, China.

August 15, 1890.

DEPARTURE OF MR. ROBERT HAKE, OF  
BARNSTAPLE,

Aged 95. Converted at 16. Fellow-labourer with  
Mr. R. C. Chapman for 59 years.

ON Tuesday morning, November 4, my beloved fellow-labourer, brother Hake, joined us at our early breakfast hour, seven o’clock. In the afternoon, rendered loving service by bearing me and others company to the station, to cheer a visitor leaving us. We returned together, held in my room our usual Tuesday afternoon meeting of prayer, in which beloved brother Hake took fully his part. We had a goodly company at six at our tea-table of young disciples of Christ, to whom brother Hake spoke joyfully of “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” The meeting, after tea, began with “We go with the redeemed to taste of joy supreme that never dies.” All that sang, and some hearing outside the room, felt the singing heavenly, the deep bass of the dear aged one perfecting the harmony. After prayer the first Psalm was read. Brother Hake took occasion to draw contrasts with the standing, walking, and sitting of the first verse: “Enoch *walked* with God”; “Elijah *stood* before the Lord”; “David *sat* before the Lord.” After he had thus, for about an hour, been the brightness of the assembly, his speech failed, but, with support, he walked to his bed-room. Our dear young brother, Idenden, in faithful love, sat up with him, and had tender words from him. I joined him about four in the morning. Brother Hake grasped my hand, and held it until he could hold it no longer, and breathed out his spirit to the Lord at 7.10 a.m. Amongst other mercies, a precious opportunity was given me of speaking to the physician. Remember us in prayer at the burial, which will be on Saturday, if God will, between 3 and 4. His beloved daughter is sustained on God.

Surely our God is the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort. He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

R. C. C.

9 New Buildings,  
Barnstaple, Nov. 5, 1890.

## Questions and Answers.

In order to have the January Issue in good time, replies to questions should be in by the 7th December at latest.

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:—

**ORDINATION OF THE LORD'S SERVANTS.**—Would it be scriptural for brethren to lay their hands on the head of one going forth in the Lord's service in those days?

**ONE BELIEVER PURGING HIMSELF FROM OTHERS.**—What is the teaching of 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21? Does "purge himself from these" include both the vessels "to honour" and "to dishonour" found in the "great house" in verse 20?

**THE LORD'S-DAY.**—How may we lawfully view the obligations of the Sabbath-day, as transferred to it? Would it not be of much benefit to the church if the whole question as to the obligations of the Lord's-day were fully entertained from the Word?

What is a "sect"?

What constitutes the difference between an assembly of God and a sect?

**FAMILY WORSHIP.**—Should what is called "Family Worship" be countenanced when the parents are not children of God?

### EXCOMMUNICATION.

**QUESTION 371.**—What scripture can be given for excluding from fellowship those who hold fundamental error?

**Ans. A.**—This is apparently a definite, but is really a broad and indefinite, question. The denial of the resurrection may be fundamental error, but Paul only gives the logical conclusion—"If Christ be not raised, your faith is void; ye are yet in your sins." Preaching "another gospel" may be fundamental error; and the apostle says, "Let him be accursed," and "I would they were even cut off who trouble you," and revisers give it, "cut themselves off," but nothing of what we call "excluding" nor "excommunication." Perhaps it will be better to produce what is stated in the New Testament about all such matters. We shall find there *who—what sort of persons*—we are to "mark" (Rom. xvi. 19), "note" (2 Thess. iii. 6-15), "avoid" (Rom.

xvi. 19), "and have no company with" (2 Thess. iii. 6-15); whom to "put away" (1 Cor. v. 11-13); with whom "no not to eat" (1 Cor. v. 11-13); whom to "warn" (1 Thess. v. 14); whom to "rebuke" (1 Tim. v. 20); from whom "withdraw yourselves" (2 Thess. iii. 6-15, 1 Tim. vi. 5); from whom "turn away" (2 Tim. iii. 1-7); whom "not to receive" (2 John 10, 11), and whom "reject" (Titus iii. 10); and whom to regard as "a heathen, or gentile man" (Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17), namely, trespassers (Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17). "Mark those who cause divisions, &c.;" "avoid them" (Rom. xvi. 19). "Fornicators, covetous, idolaters, revilers, drunkards, extortioners; with such no not to eat"; "put away that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 11, 12, 13). "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. . . . Note that man, and have no company with him" (2 Thess. iii. 6-15). "Withdraw thyself from men of corrupt minds," &c. (1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5), "Turn away from those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof" (2 Tim. iii. 1-7). "Warn those that are unruly or disorderly" (1 Thess. v. 14). "Rebuke those that sin" (1 Tim. v. 20). "Reject a man that is a heretic after a first and second admonition" (Titus iii. 10). "Receive him not into your house who brings not the true doctrine of Christ," as set out by the apostle in 2 John 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. It will be noticed *how little* is written by the apostle about "cutting off," "putting away," "excluding," "excommunicating." Turning to the question, we do not know what is meant or referred to as "fundamental error." There are so many "*views*" of truths at the present day that one can scarcely reply to a question without first trying to ascertain what is meant or referred to. If by "fundamental error" is meant the denial of "man's ruin and God's remedy," the value and the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, the reality of the atonement, or of the resurrection, the denial that "Jesus Christ came in the flesh," or that He was "declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead," if a man or a teacher is a disciple of Strauss or Renan: if any of these he is a "heretic," and "a heretic after the first and the second admonition reject" (Titus iii. 10), nor receive such an one into your house if he is of the pattern mentioned in 2 John 7-9. But never use this latter passage as it was in 1849, 1850, and even later. L. D. G.

**Ans. B.**—In 1 Cor. v. 4, 5, we see one "delivered unto Satan" for *moral sin* by apostolic authority; and in verse 13 the assembly are enjoined to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person." In 1 Tim. ii. 19, 20, we see two men "delivered unto Satan" by the same authority for *doctrinal sin*; and surely the inference is plain that their place was also outside the assembly. Surely no assembly of saints who desire to please the Lord and guard His truth could think of retaining in their fellowship those whom the Lord has, by apostolic authority, delivered unto Satan. To do so would be a denial of Him as Lord over all to the Church. But other passages teach that in dealing with such there must be discrimination. "Of some have compassion, making a difference" (Jude 22). There were some in the church at Corinth who were saying "there is no resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 12). But the apostle does not at once deliver them unto

Satan as he did in the case of Hymeneus and Alexander. He patiently instructed them. Had they refused to bow to the truth, and had they become confirmed in their error, there can be no doubt they would have merited the same judgment as Hymeneus and Alexander. Paul's teaching was the same "everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. iv. 17). There was not one rule for Ephesus and another for Corinth. Then again, in 2 Tim. ii. 19-21, while the faithful are enjoined to depart from doctrinal iniquity, and to purge themselves from those who are doctrinally unclean, yet verses 25, 26 teaches the duty of meekly instructing those who are ensnared, and to seek their deliverance. I believe these verses have a specific reference to those whose faith had been overthrown by Hymeneus and Philetus. To teach that all who are not gathered unto the Name are in the snare of the Devil, mentioned here, appears to me to be going beyond the truth. We need much wisdom to guard the truth of our God, and at the same time deal in grace with those who are in error. G. A.

**Editor's Note.**—We have received several rather lengthy replies amounting to a contention that there is no Scriptural authority for excluding from fellowship the holders of fundamental error. We insert one.

We are certainly surprised to find that a position so far from the teaching of the Word of God is contended for by any who profess regard for the honour of the Lord.

The reply of our correspondent, G. A., gives what we believe to be the truth so far as it goes. But there are other points which we desire to bring forward as concisely as we can.

True, in Gal. v. 12, it is "I would they would even cut themselves off"; but let it be observed that *not* having withdrawn, the responsibility is cast, in verse 10, upon those addressed. The passage is wholly analogous to 1 Cor. v. There also, had they "mourned" instead of being "puffed up," the evil-doer might have been "taken away from among" them. But as he was not "taken away," they were responsible to *put him away*. So also the use of the type "leaven." In 1 Cor. v., the purging out of the leaven *involved* the putting away of the wicked person. And in Gal. v. it is impossible, with an unbiassed mind, to arrive at any other conclusion than that the same responsibility rests on the Galatians that rested on the Corinthians, viz., to purge out the leaven, and that by causing the one who, by fundamentally erroneous doctrines, had unsettled or troubled them to bear his judgment. And immediately follows exhortation to *love*, showing that love to the saints demands the preservation of the assembly from the teachings and presence of those who hold fundamental error.

Another scripture on the point is Rev. ii. The Lord commends Ephesus for its hatred of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes as well as for its trial and judgment of false apostles. But He censures Pergamos for having amongst them those who hold the doctrine of Nicolaitanes. If this means anything at all, it means that Pergamos had failed in its responsibility to judge this evil and to purge out this leaven.

As to Hymeneus, Philetus, and Alexander, heretics of Paul's day, as shown by G. A., HE was at no loss about how to deal with them. And severe as his sentence may appear in 1 Tim. i. 20, it was the only

way that *love* could take; and the very word used, that they may "*learn*," implies love, and implies that he did not yet regard them as unregenerate persons, for it signifies parental family discipline for blessing and not for destruction.

It was love to them, and love to the flock liable to be influenced by them, to "deliver them to Satan."

But there is yet another aspect of this that remains to be noticed, viz., the connection between false doctrine and an evil conscience. Paul tells the secret of the fall of Hymeneus and Alexander: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning the faith have made shipwreck."

So in dealing with doctrinal evil at Corinth he says, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God" (1 Cor. xv. 24). He traces the denial of the resurrection to unrighteousness and sin, thus evidently connecting false doctrine with an unexercised conscience.

Again the same thought is found in 1 Tim. iii. 9, where the ministering ones in the assembly are to be only such as hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

It may not be easy to so define what is and what is not "fundamental" as to carry conviction to every mind. But it does not seem that the gravity of the error is so much in question as the persistence with which it is maintained. Any child of God may be ensnared and may become entangled in the meshes of error, and none would contend that the first step was "exclusion from fellowship." We believe the first step is that the spiritual endeavour to reach his conscience as well as his understanding, after the example of Paul in his dealing with Corinth. Vigilant care would thus deliver and restore many a one without the final step of "cutting off." But, as in Matt. xviii., it is the obduracy of the trespasser and not the enormity of the original trespass that puts him in the place of the heathen man and publican, so as to doctrinal error, it is after endeavours to convince, and one admonition after another have failed to restore, that the obdurate opposer of the truth is to be rejected.

#### THE FAITHFUL REMNANT.

**QUESTION 372**—Is it right for those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart to view themselves as forming the faithful remnant of their day?

**Ans. A.**—We have to be on our guard against applying titles to ourselves, which, though bearing the appearance of humility, may possibly be simply pride. The expression, "faithful remnant," may be gathered from the Scriptures in a twofold connection:—First, The people who came up from Babylon in Ezra's day were but a remnant. From the book of Esther we learn that very many, who might have returned, preferred to remain in the strange land—evidently preferring worldly ease and prosperity to poverty and contempt in Jerusalem. The company who availed themselves of the king's decree and returned, were indeed a faithful remnant—their *hearts* were stirred up and God's glory was sought by them, even though it entailed loss and shame to themselves. Second, Those of Israel in the latter day who will

decline to worship the image, and who will diligently maintain their testimony for God amid the darkness of the times, are again a faithful remnant. God *first* with them: His Word their source of authority and rejection; persecution, suffering, and even death, the result.

To return to our own days—they are evil ones. That which professes the Name of Christ on the earth has long since departed from its true and proper position; Christ is not owned practically as Lord, His Word is not the only authority bowed to, and the Church's heavenly character is overlooked. This is true of the mass; but, in the mercy of our God, there are some to-day to whom Christ is everything, and to whom His Word is all sufficient. Such are few in number, and are indeed a remnant. If we feel ourselves to be a "faithful remnant," let us see well to it that in heart and character we correspond to the two remnants above referred to. Profession and name are one thing—heart-reality quite another. W. W. F.

**Ans. B.**—There is no passage in the New Testament where the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is called or referred to as *a* or *the* remnant. This term in Isaiah x., Romans ix. and xi, and elsewhere, applies to Israel. "Even at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans xi. 5), and in Rev. vii., prior to the Son of Man coming to earth, we read of a remnant of 144,000 servants of God being sealed in their foreheads, and this same remnant is spoken of in Joel ii. 32. God is not gathering out "a remnant," but a Church, which is the Body of Christ, and those who by God's grace are members of this Body cannot take any credit to themselves for their faithfulness. Thank God, they are *kept* (*guarded*, R.V.) by His power through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. The Church will not be saved as the remnant of Israel will, through the great tribulation. We must be careful how we appropriate terms without discrimination. There is a difference between the spiritual Israel, the children of faithful Abraham (see Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8), and Israel after the flesh. There is no authority in Scripture for believers viewing themselves as the faithful remnant of their day. W. D. B.

**Ans. C.**—This would depend on the spirit in which it is done. If it is done to extol the grace of God in making them to "differ" from others, it will be pleasing to Him. But in any case it would be better to omit the word "faithful." Purity of heart before the Lord will have a very low estimate of its own faithfulness. We never find the remnant who came out of Babylon viewing themselves as faithful, but the opposite (see Ezra ix. 10. and Neh. ix.). Those who profess to have been delivered from the bondage of mystical Babylon greatly lack the humility and broken-heartedness which characterised the remnant in the days referred to. If the Lord has in His special goodness and mercy delivered us out of sectarian bondage, and gathered us back to the simplicity of His Word, let us magnify the grace that made us to "differ" from our fellow-saints we left behind us. But in view of the divisions, contentions, carnality, and worldliness among those who profess to have been thus delivered, there is surely no room to call ourselves "faithful"; and if our calling on

the Lord out of a pure heart is a reality and not a pretence, we will never speak or think of our own faithfulness, but of the mercy of Him who hath "led us out" unto Himself. G. A.

#### ASSEMBLY SINGING.

**QUESTION 373.**—In our worship or fellowship meetings is it best for one brother to lead regularly, or should each brother have opportunity to lead his own hymn or psalm?

**Ans. A.**—This would depend very much on the capacity of the brethren to lead the praises of the assembly. If only one brother *can* lead the singing then only one brother *should* do so; but if more than one can lead, there is no more reason why one should always lead in praise than there is that one should always lead in thanksgiving or ministry. Let there be as much fellowship as possible, always having due regard to the principle of edification, which must be hindered if anyone assays to lead who is unfitted. No rule can be laid down where we have none given in Scripture; but if the brother who is led of the Spirit to give out a hymn can lead in singing it, it does appear to be a *comely* thing that he should do so. The less prominence of any single individual in fellowship meetings the better; and should it be needful for one always to lead the singing the leading voice should be as little recognised as may be consistent with effective leading (see 2 Chron. v. 13, 14). The state of the heart is the chief thing. But while giving all due care to have our hearts tuned, that is no reason why we should neglect the voice; and younger brethren especially should cultivate a knowledge of vocal music to enable them to lead the singing, and all in fellowship should seek to use well the voice which God has given us. G. A.

**Ans. B.**—Certainly if the brother is *capable* of doing so, having been "*first proved*" (1 Tim. iii. 10), he should have the opportunity of leading the hymn he may give out. If in an assembly *one brother only* is qualified and approved, such an one ought, by all means, to lead regularly. But where there are several who are capable and approved, it cannot be the mind of God that there should be "one man ministry" in this more than in any other sphere of service. The principles governing ministry generally surely apply to this special ministry (see 1 Thess. v. 19, and 1 Cor. xiv. 40). T. F. H. F.

**Ans. C.**—We should carefully avoid every appearance of professionalism in our worship meetings. Every brother has opportunity to lead his psalm or hymn, *provided he has the ability so to do*. Nevertheless, we deem it expedient that a brother possessing a rudimentary understanding of music undertake responsibility in this matter, that "all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40). But in our larger assemblies, where many brethren can render this service with equal acceptance, let it not be made an occasion to "bite and devour one another" (Gal. v. 15), but be prized as an opportunity for "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. v. 21). Dearly beloved, "Let **NOTHING** be done through strife or vainglory; but in *lowliness of mind* let each esteem other **BETTER** than themselves" (Phil. ii. 3). T. B.